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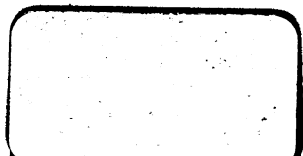
ACROSS THE ARID ZONE



WALTER S. CRAMP

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ACROSS THE ARID ZONE

By
WALTER S. CRAMP

Author of
"The Heart of Silence," "The Biter,"
"Psyche," etc.



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ACROSS THE ARID ZONE

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CHAPTER I

"What's the matter, Father?" asked Tom Larkin as he stood near a great folding desk in an office of one of the great railroad systems of the country, "I never saw you so worried as you are to-day."

"Matter? Why, Tom, there's always something the matter! Every day brings some problem to be solved, but to-day there is one that has come up which for the moment staggers me. I've gone through many tight places and I suppose I can squeeze through this."

"What's gone wrong? Something about the railroad?"

"Something, Tom, that so far only two men know about; something which, if known, would create a panic in the stock market and make me a poor man."

"Is it that serious?"

"It is that serious, Tom, that it means life or death to one of the finest railroad systems in the United States. As long as I have been president of the company nothing more serious has arisen."

"Can't I help you?" the young man asked.

Then feeling as if he had assumed an air of importance which he was sure he did not possess, he added, "I wish I could help you. But somehow, Father, you never trust me in your business affairs. Here I am in my twenty-fifth year, and I have accomplished nothing. My career at college was something not to brag about. My European trip brought nothing to you but expense. Now to-night I leave for California with Mother, and another winter will go by with nothing done to make you proud of me."

"Why, Tom, while it is true you have done nothing as yet, you are still young. You have chosen a path that I would not have taken. But still literary work is not degrading. I had hoped that you would take up banking or brokerage, or something of that kind. You inherit your mother's artistic tastes, and I fear that you are not fit for busi-

ness—that is, the crushing strain of business as we have it to-day.”

“No. I’m not fit for it. When I see my friends with their nerves so high strung that they have to drink a cocktail or two for lunch, when they have to stimulate themselves with gambling on the stock exchange, with bridge, with vulgar shows, I’m glad I’m not fit for it.”

“But I don’t do those things.”

“No. You only play the stocks. Father, we don’t seem to be of the same stuff. I wonder where the fault lies. I wish you would trust me more than you do. Tell me where you stand. I’m not afraid to work at anything. I have not studied music in vain, and if it comes down to the bread and butter of life I can make that for you and mother by that and by my pen. These things sound childish compared to running a big railroad, but, Father, they have their places. When I was eighteen I wanted to work in the shops and learn engineering, but you insisted on my going to college, and here I am, perhaps a worthless thing living on my parents.”

“No, no, Tom, not as bad as that.”

“Well, I don’t like it. I’ve got to do some-

thing, and what's more, I'm going to do it this winter out in California. Father, you must take me into your confidence. What is it that worries you?"

"I suppose I ought to tell you how I do stand financially. You know that your mother possessed bonds and property that would keep us alive for many years. But that would not help me if I should fail. The fact that I was unsuccessful would be a blow which would crush me more than anything else in the world."

"Not more than harm to your family, Father?"

"Tom, that's a hard question to answer. I want to see you and mother happy above everything else, but my whole heart and soul, as you no doubt have already found out, are wrapt up in my business. As you know, I have never had a day's rest. Even Sundays I come here and work. Why, I am a regular machine with no flesh or blood. This grieves your mother, but I can't help it. I've got to work. Something drives me on and I can't stop."

"But some day you will stop. The strain will be too much, and like many business men

you will get the blow that will make you rest. Then what will you do with your time?"

"Well, Tom," he replied cheerfully, "I guess I'm good for many years yet. When that day comes I'll take up literature."

"Don't make fun of me, father."

"I'm not. But let me tell you how I stand. I have borrowed five million dollars for which I hold one hundred thousand shares in the railroad. Then with my other stocks mostly guaranteed by the same road, I am worth another four millions. You see, Tom, that everything centers around one thing. If the stock of the railroad should depreciate by any sudden disaster, why I'm a ruined man. At present it sells on the exchange above par. If what I know and one other man knows becomes public, I will not have a dollar to my name."

"Why not? Is it as bad as that, Father?"

"Yes. But it could be worse. The man is one of the kind that is rarely seen these days in public office. He is honest with the full meaning of the word. I have his record in these sheets of paper. Yesterday afternoon I received his letter, and here at ten in the

morning I have that man's history. It was telegraphed by our lawyer from California."

"Then the man is a Californian?"

"How do you work that out, Tom?"

"You wouldn't go to a man in Iowa to find out about a man from New York, would you?"

"You can't tell. However, you're right, the man is a Californian."

"And what is he, a mayor, congressman, senator or governor?"

"What makes you think that?"

"You said that he was one of the kind that is rarely seen in public office. Father, a private citizen could not hold up a railroad very well, a man in office could."

Mr. Larkin seemed to gather a great deal of satisfaction from the way his son was now talking.

"So you think it is a hold-up, do you, Tom?"

"With some men it would be. I don't know who this man is."

"As far as I am able to judge, and I can read a character pretty well, this man is absolutely upright. Such men are the hardest kind to get along with. They see a duty and nothing can change them."

"Then, father, railroads fear honest men?"

"No, not always," Mr. Larkin replied laughing. "In this instance," he added, becoming more serious, "I fear this man."

"Who is he?"

Mr. Larkin did not reply immediately. His steel blue eyes looked at the papers before him, and then turning them upon his son, he said, "Tom, you said that I did not trust you. I will now. I will tell you about this, one of the greatest crises in my life. The man is the governor of California."

"But what can a governor of State do against a railroad, unless the railroad has done something wrong?"

"I cannot say that a wrong has been done. The sins of a railroad are somewhat like our own, Tom. It depends upon the point of view. However that may be, here is Governor Johnson's letter. He evidently knows the importance of what he has learned. I want you to notice one thing, that he would not trust his knowledge to a typewriter, but wrote it with his own hand. I carry it with me as I would not trust it even to my most private box in the vault. Read that to yourself. Lock the door and don't talk very loud."

Tom obeyed, and then he read the letter:—

“Sacramento, Nov. 25, 190—
Mr. Frank Larkin, President,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:—

I wish to bring to your attention a paper which I discovered by accident while searching through the old state records. There must be a corresponding one somewhere in the vaults of your company. The paper, has been overlooked by the former governors, and all trace of its existence, it would seem, had been lost a few years after its execution. Its contents are certainly startling, and if published, would play havoc in the financial world. I deemed it, therefore, advisable to consult you first and hear your opinion. The grant is an old Spanish one which your Company bought years ago. It is a right-of-way for a transportation company in the state, and provides that, if in future the said company proved successful, it should pay into the state, before the expiration of a certain time, a sum based upon its valuation of land on the day of payment. This you see, would now make a sum, taking it at its lowest estimate equal to two hundred millions of dollars. I would, therefore, request that you or your lawyer

meet me and talk over some satisfactory arrangement before making the document public.

Yours truly,
Albert Johnson,
Governor of the State of
California."

Tom Larkin looked at his father when he had finished, and he found that he had been watched intently as he read.

"Have you found the corresponding paper belonging to the railroad?" he asked.

"Yes, I did not go home to dinner last night on account of it. It was wrapped with a lot of papers that were considered of no value. But it seems to have value, doesn't it?"

"And the company's lawyer. What does he say?"

"It's not so much the question of what he says for the moment. Let the people know about it and the stock will fall below fifty. That would wipe out my loan in one stroke. So you see, Tom, it's a tough problem, isn't it?"

"You haven't telegraphed the governor, have you?"

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"No, not yet."

"Well, I wouldn't. Don't appear anxious."

"That sounds like good advice. But do you know when this paper expires?"

"No."

"In twenty days."

"In twenty days!" Tom exclaimed, "Why, father, that is serious."

"Yes, Tom. It's nearly a calamity. To raise two hundred million in twenty days at this time when money is scarce, and more, when the market is weak, is nearly impossible."

"Well, Father, mother and I will not go to California."

"I have thought that over, too. But why not?"

"We ought to be near you."

"Tom, you can do no good by remaining home. Your mother must leave this climate, and you must go with her."

"But I want to help you."

"Tell me what could you do?"

"Not very much, I'll admit." Tom replied in a disappointed tone. "My help would find little place in what your lawyers and dictators would advise."

"No. You must go. Understand now,

I do trust you. Not one word of what we have said, not even to your mother."

"Father, I'm sorry that you feel that you have to warn me not to say anything. It will be as if I had not known it at all. But you are busy! Will you be home for dinner? You know we eat to-night at six."

"I may be late, but I'll be there."

CHAPTER II

Tom passed through the waiting room and saw many men who wished to interview his father. One of them was a president of a bank; another a large grain speculator; and another a prominent merchant. He nodded to them and went out into the hallway. He felt dissatisfied with himself, and yet he could not tell exactly why. Everybody he passed in the building was hurrying about busily engaged in something, except himself, and he thought that they belonged to another world of which he was not a part. So depressed and absent-minded was he that he did not press the button at the elevator, and before he regained his senses one of the elevator boys recognizing him, came back and asked him if he wished to go down. He entered but relapsed again into thought. This time he did not come to himself until he was seated in his automobile and had heard the chauffeur ask, "Where do you want to go, Mr. Larkin?"

"Anywhere for an hour," he replied, buttoning the collar of his fur-lined coat around his neck.

It was a cold November day and an icy wind blew from the lake which fumed and fretted under a grey, somber heaven. As he sped along, Tom felt very much as in the mornings of remorse, after a night at the club, with this difference, that he did not regret what he had done, but what he had not done. He did not like the idea of being considered useless in the world, and still he could not help but think that he was. He had accomplished nothing as yet that would startle anyone in his literary work. Although his father did not discourage his writings, yet he knew that he had no great respect for authors and artists, giving as his reason that there was not an atom of business in them. In a way Tom knew that this was true. His bank account was always in a muddle because he rarely remembered to record cash checks at hotels and clubs that he had signed. Then, too, his judgment was poor in stocks, in grain, and he always played the wrong side. Why he felt on this day that even gilt-edged securities would lose their standing if he bought them.

Like many people he said things in his mind about himself that he would never say out loud to anyone.

"Yes," he thought, "I am a loafer. There's father doing more work than a dozen ordinary men. Big men consult him, and he has a standing that only a few men reach. Everybody seems to be earning something except me. I take my allowance just as a girl takes her pin money to buy dresses with. Why, even Frank, the chauffeur, earns more than I do. If I want anything published, I've got to pay for it. Magazines turn down everything I write, and yet I consider it good stuff. Oh! If I could only do something, no matter what, dig, carry messages, or even lay bricks. There must be a joy in making money. But I can't see it. After my trip to Algiers and Italy it looks to me as if people who do not earn much are happier than those who do. I suppose they have their moments of disgust, too. Even if they do, their happiness far outweighs their misery. Yes, but they do something. They work at times.

"That's it," he continued, "work; a man who doesn't work is not fit to live. And I'm one of that kind. But what shall I do?

Don't I read? Don't I sit at my desk by the hour and write? Don't I delve into human nature, and if I don't discover anything new, I learn something. Must I think that all of my time is wasted? And this winter! What shall I do? Take mother to California? I love my mother, but that's no reason why father insists that I shall go with her as a trained nurse. I had to take her to Europe, to the mountains, and now to California. It seems to me that father is not playing the part of a husband as he should. Well! he has no wife, no son, no home, nothing except that office and the railroad. It's wrong. Yes, there's a big mistake somewhere, and perhaps I'm it.

"And that good, dear mother of mine," he continued, "wants me to marry. Marry! Why, I haven't found the girl yet that I would ever consider worth marrying. Girls are all right in their places, but to have one about you all the time—well! I'm going to hesitate a long while before I fall into that trap. Why, what I've seen of it seems like a failure. Mother does as she wants, father does as he wants, and neither seems to care what the other does. Still, my life is not ideal.

Clubs, bridge, poker, drinks, writing and reading don't make a good combination. Yes, I am useless. If I wore different clothes and had different manners, I'd be a loafer for sure.

"And California! I don't want to go to California. There's nothing to do for a visitor but look at grand scenery, beautiful valleys, luxurious flowers and eat oranges. Then, there are a lot of people I must meet that I don't care about, and they don't care about me. I wonder who's going out on our train? Frank!" he called to the chauffeur, "go to the ticket office!"

He was known at the office, and the cards on which the names of the people were written, who had reserved accommodations on the limited train, were handed to him. "Full train, hey?" he asked, seeing that there were only a few upper berths vacant.

"Yes, even they will be sold, I believe, before the train starts."

Suddenly his eyes caught two names that looked familiar.

"When did these two young ladies engage their state room?"

"A few days ago."

He had not met them, but he said, "I know

them both very well. I had no idea that they were going to California or I should have had them in our private car. I should like to play a joke upon them."

"How's that?"

"Why, have you give me duplicate tickets, and date them ahead of theirs. Go ahead and do it. It will be a pleasant surprise to them to find that they have no accommodations, and then have our car to fall back upon. To make it still more amusing, I'll take all the remaining upper berths so that they can't take them. Mother and I are the only ones to use our car, and there will be ample room for these ladies. It will be a surprise all around."

The ticket agent hesitated a moment, but as he knew that Mrs. Larkin and her son were the only ones to use their private car, and as the request for the breaking of the rules came from the president's son, he did not refuse.

"Of course you will release the upper berths if I find passengers?" he asked.

"Certainly," Tom replied.

"That will relieve the monotony of the trip west," he said to himself as he left the office, first assuring himself before buttoning up his great coat that the tickets were in his wallet.

CHAPTER III

A half hour before the Limited started that evening Tom had his mother's maid nicely settled in the state room that really belonged to the two young ladies who were going to California. At the ticket office, the agent had erased their names on the slips for the parlor-car conductor, and had substituted the one given by Tom. There was no question, therefore, in the conductor's mind that the right owner had not taken possession. Mrs. Larkin had not wished to start so early for the train, but as her husband had telephoned home that it would be impossible to leave the office until late, and that he would meet her at the depot, she had thought that he would be there early. She had seated herself in the drawing room of their private car and at present was wondering why Tom had wanted her maid to take a room in the Limited, especially as their private car was to be attached to the Colorado Express at Kansas City the next morning. But she had

agreed, because he seemed anxious to have her do so. The air in the private car was heavy with the perfume of flowers that friends had sent. One large bouquet of orchids was from her husband. That she had given the place of honor on the table. She waited there nearly a quarter of an hour for Mr. Larkin, and when he did come he appeared nervous.

"I'm very sorry, dear," he said, "that I could not take dinner with you before you started. But I'm very, very busy."

"You are always that, Frank. The life you lead would kill any ordinary man."

"I know. I'm getting older and am getting busier every day. There seems to be no repose. Every day something new springs up, and really, dear, I'm worried to-day, beside being busy. Are those the orchids my secretary brought? I really had no time to leave my desk all day. I even ate my lunch and dinner there."

"What's worrying you?"

"It's something about the railroad. I can't go into details, but this time it's a hard question to answer."

"Frank, it's absurd for you to give so much time to business. Here we are, both in the

fifties, and instead of building up a home, we are living a life of separation. When shall we see you again? In California, or in Chicago when we return?"

"In California. I must go out there perhaps in two weeks. But where's Tom?"

"He's taking a walk through the cars to see who are going with us."

"Katherine, there's more in Tom than I had given him credit for. He surprised me to-day by the way he talked. If he'd only give up music, art and writing, he'd make a man of himself."

"I've always said, Frank, that you never understood him. He'll surprise us both some day."

"I hope so. But I don't see your maid, Mary. Isn't she going along?"

"Yes. Tom wanted her to go in the other car as far as Kansas City. I don't know why, but he asked me to let her do it, and I consented."

"If I hadn't had the talk with him this morning, I would say it's a foolish whim. But I suppose there must be a reason for it."

At that moment Tom entered. It was very

near starting time, and the two young ladies had not come.

"Well, Father," he said, "I thought when you told me that you would be home for dinner that something would detain you."

"There was only one thing that would detain me this time, and you know what it is. But now that I've seen you both, I'll have to say good-bye. I have an appointment with Humphreys this evening, and I don't think that I'll see bed until midnight."

Tom knew that Humphreys was the greatest corporation lawyer in the east, and he said, "I should like to be at that meeting."

"Nobody but he and I will be there. But I must go. Good-bye, now dear, write to me often, and do not mind if I am lax and I don't answer right away."

He gave her a hasty kiss, and Tom went to the end of the car with him.

"Now, Father," he said, "You would not give me a chance to help you, but I may do more than you think."

"You are surely not going to tell anyone what I told you?" Mr. Larkin asked, as if frightened.

"I'll not answer that question. You have

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trusted me, and I'll show you that I deserve that confidence. You work your way. I'll work mine."

"But—"

"There's no 'but' about it. Our ways will not conflict."

"Tom, you're a mystery."

"Then you cannot fathom me. I'm glad I'm that deep. We'll see you then, in California?"

"Yes, before the expiration of that awful day, Tom."

"Don't call it 'awful' yet. Father, a great many things may happen in that time."

"All I can say to you, Tom, is to be careful."

He extended his hand and Tom kissed his cheek. As they separated, Tom saw two young ladies hurrying through the gate. He jumped down from the car and watched them. Both were fine-looking, but one especially, was strikingly beautiful. Both appeared excited.

"If that's not a miracle, I don't know what is," said the prettier of the two. "I never thought we'd make it."

"Thank goodness, our trunks were checked this afternoon, or else we would have to go

without them," said the other, nearly out of breath.

Tom followed them. He saw the parlor-car conductor take their tickets, and he heard him call out to the porter who was carrying the ladies' bags, "Stateroom A, car number three."

Tom went up to him and said, "They are the two ladies I spoke to you about. They did not see me. I've instructed Mrs. Larkin's maid, under no condition, to give up the room, and after the train is under way and the ladies are worried about accommodations, suggest to them the compartment in our car. But be sure, do not tell them that it is a private car, or don't mention our name. That might spoil the surprise."

"All right, Mr. Larkin, I understand."

The conductor of the train called out, "All aboard," and Larkin stepped upon the train. In going to join his mother, he had to pass through car number three, and he was glad to see that Mary was holding the stateroom. The porter who carried the bags passed him and gave him a salute which Tom did not see. The car porter was already at the door of the stateroom, and the two ladies were near him.

The prettier of the two was evidently the stronger personality, because the other appealed to her.

"What's to be done, Elizabeth?" he heard the other ask.

Nothing could have pleased Tom more than to learn that she was the one who bore that name.

"Perhaps there are other staterooms, Nina," she replied. "We'll wait until the conductor comes."

"Excuse me, Miss, the train's sold out," the porter politely informed her.

"Is there nothing, not even upper berths?" Elizabeth asked, somewhat confused.

"Nothing. The train's over-crowded. Perhaps this lady here will take you in. There's room enough for three."

Larkin caught Mary's eye, and shook his head for her to refuse. He heard Elizabeth ask her, "May I learn when you bought this compartment?"

That was a dangerous question, and he feared Mary's reply. But she said quietly, "The ticket was bought for me. I do not know."

"You're a trump, Mary," Larkin said to himself.

"It's certainly strange, Nina. When we bought our tickets we saw distinctly that no one had this stateroom. Porter, where is the conductor?"

"He'll be here pretty soon, Miss. But would the lady mind taking in these other two?"

"Well, really—" Mary hesitated.

"Oh, no!" said Elizabeth. "We would not think of that. The question resolves itself, to whom does this room belong."

Everything seemed to be working out capitally so far, and when Tom saw the two ladies seated near the stateroom, he went back to join his mother.

"Tom," she said, "Your father didn't look well to-night, did he?"

"I didn't notice anything unusual."

"I never saw him more nervous. The railroad will be the death of him yet. What's the matter? Is the railroad losing money?"

"No, the earnings show an increase over last year."

"Then what is it? I wish he'd give up business and live with us more. Even if he loses everything, I have enough to keep us until we die."

"Mother, father enjoys work. Without something to do, he would go crazy. But I want to tell you something. Do you remember hearing your namesake and favorite niece, Katherine, speak of Elizabeth Johnson and Nina Willets?"

"Yes. They were her best friends at Farmington."

"They are on the train."

"But we don't know them."

"No; but they don't seem to have any berths."

"That's easily fixed. Give them Mary's room."

"But that's what I don't want to do. I want to bring them back here."

"Now, Tom, I don't feel like entertaining people going out to California. Miss Johnson's the daughter of the governor, isn't she?"

"Yes."

"Well, that means—"

"Now, Mother," he interrupted, "it doesn't mean anything. They are both fine girls, and to tell you the truth, when I learned that they were going out on our train, I bought their stateroom over their heads. Mary has it, and I want to bring them back here."

"Why, Tom, that wasn't right."

"No, perhaps not, but I want to meet Miss Johnson, especially now I have seen her."

"It doesn't sound right to invite them back here."

"I'm not inviting them. I told the parlor-car conductor to give them our guest's room and not to tell them that it was a private car."

"Tom, what are you up to?" she asked suspiciously.

"Nothing, I want to make the governor friendly to the railroad. I want to meet him. A favor to his daughter might help father a great deal."

"But perhaps they won't accept our hospitality?"

"They won't know of it until they have to. Now, don't worry, Mother. I've got it all arranged nicely. You are mostly in your room, and they will not bother you."

"Well, all right. I suppose I'll have to consent."

"Call it a business requirement."

"No, I hate that word."

"Then call it hospitality. Fred," he called

to the black servant of their car, "is everything fixed in the guest's room?"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Larkin."

"There will be two young ladies here presently. Don't tell them that this is a private car, and don't say 'Mrs. Larkin wants this,' or 'Mr. Larkin wants that,' try to make them believe that they are on a regular parlor car until to-morrow morning."

"All right, sir."

"Draw the curtain and don't let them come back here."

When Fred had done so, Mrs. Larkin said, "That's all very well, Tom, but how about Mary? I shall want her when I go to bed."

He answered her that he could also arrange that, and he went into his state room to hear what Elizabeth and her friend Nina might say when they took possession of their new room. The car had been built especially to suit the needs of Mr. Larkin's family. At the end there was an observation platform, then came the drawing room, and then four large staterooms, all connected with each other. These also had doors that led into a passageway. At the other end was the kitchen. Tom was not in his room very long before he

heard the conductor and the two ladies enter. He heard Elizabeth express surprise at the rich woodwork. Then he heard her thank the conductor, and say that everything was satisfactory.

"We'd better close this door, Nina," she said, when the conductor had left the car. "There are a lot of busy bodies who just love to peep into drawing rooms on such a trip as this."

"I hate prying eyes, too," replied Nina. "But it seems to me that we are lucky in getting such a nice room. It's much finer than the one we reserved. Do you know, Elizabeth, I think the woman who had our room is a maid."

"That's just what I thought. You can always tell maids. They have one thing that's nice, but everything else doesn't go with it. But why would a maid want a whole stateroom to herself, and staterooms, you know, can't be had without money."

"Perhaps," suggested Nina, "she is holding it for someone who will get on later."

"Ah, yes, that must be it," replied Elizabeth, with satisfaction.

Tom was enjoying every word. He had lit

a cigarette and had stretched himself on the car seat. Suddenly he thought of his mother's wish to have Mary help her undress, and he opened his door that led into the hallway and beckoned for Fred. He then whispered the order, cautioning him to tell Mary to hurry. Fred had hardly left the car when the electric bell began to ring.

He thought that it was his mother, until he heard Elizabeth say, "I suppose it's useless to ring for the porter. They never answer the call until you forget what you rang for."

There was quiet for sometime.

"Didn't I tell you? The porters have a way of hanging around the dining car like so many flies around a sugar lump. I'll give it another ring."

This time she held her finger upon the electric button for fully a minute. Mrs. Larkin, at this call, joined her son, and said in a low tone, "Your strange friends are a little impolite."

"Hush!" whispered Tom, "Listen!"

"Why, see here!" they heard Nina say, "Look at this towel!"

"What's the matter with it?" asked Elizabeth.

"There's an 'L' on it. And see what fine linen it is."

"That's so. I wonder what the 'L' stands for?"

"Ladies, I suppose."

"Of course. This must be a ladies' car. But I should say that it was a private car, if I did not know that railroads are always trying something new. Do you smell tobacco smoke?"

"Yes, I suppose it comes from the smoking room."

"No" said Elizabeth. "It comes from that room there."

Mrs. Larkin now smiled as she looked at her son. Fred had now returned with Mary and he answered the call.

"Porter, where have you been?" Elizabeth asked. "I've rung that bell for half an hour."

"What can I do for you?"

"What did I ring for, Nina?"

"Ventilation," her friend replied.

"Oh, yes, porter, give us a little more air. The room is stuffy. Is there a smoking room next to this one?"

"No, ma'am."

"Well, someone is smoking in there, and

they ought to be made to stop. Is this a ladies' car?"

"No, mam."

"Then what does the 'L' stand for on the towels?"

"Oh, that!" exclaimed the darkey, while Tom and his mother wondered what sort of a reply he would make, "That stands for 'last'. You know it's in the 'last' car. It's a new system they've got."

"Oh, I understand. Now request that gentleman to go into the smoking room, give us more air, and then make up the berths. My friend and I will go into the forward car and wait until you call us."

"All right, miss."

Tom waited until he heard the door of the car close and then he said to his mother, "What do you think of them?"

"It's hard to give an opinion, Tom, on such a strange acquaintance. Their voices sound all right, but I think the one who does the ordering is rather bossy—no, what do you call it—domineering?"

"That's Miss Johnson."

"How do you know?"

Then he explained to her what he had heard

when they found that they could not have their stateroom. His mother did not enter with the same spirit into the little plot, as Tom called it. She insisted that Miss Johnson should be told that she was in a private car before she went to sleep; but Tom talked her out of that. What bothered him was when they arrived at Kansas City the next morning, whether he should allow them to take Mary's room and continue west on the Limited, or remain with his mother and him. He seemed to like both of the girls. Still, to be in the same car with them for three days with no chance of escape, made him hesitate before making a decision. While his mother prepared for bed, he put on his coat and leaving the private car, took a camp stool and sat down on the platform of the observation car ahead. It was against the rules for any private car to be attached to the limited train but as the trip to Kansas City was made at night, and as the Limited left two hours after the Colorado Express, thereby giving Mrs. Larkin time for dinner at home, the president had broken the rules on this occasion.

It was cold out on the platform, and Tom felt conspicuous as the people inside looked at

him. He glanced through the door a few times, in order to see Elizabeth and her friend. Nina was sitting at the writing desk, and Elizabeth sat near her, looking over a magazine. They had taken off their street hats and had put on white felt ones, and Tom thought that Elizabeth looked better with that simple hat than with the other. He finished smoking his cigarette, and tried to light another, but the drafts that the fast-moving train created, made that impossible. Giving up the attempt he entered the reading room, and throwing aside his overcoat, took up a magazine and sat down upon one of the empty chairs near the door.

But he could not read. Even the pictures would not claim his attention. It was easy enough for him to fall into an acquaintanceship slowly, but to plan how to form a new one quickly, and how to make a favorable impression without overdoing it, certainly had its difficulties, which he was now beginning to understand. How was he to tell her that her room was in a private car? How should he introduce himself to her? What would he do with Mary? How could he explain away her occupation of their stateroom? These and

many other questions floated through his mind. He did not fear that he could not do everything in a natural way, but the thought that he had to do so, made the performance somewhat difficult.

Gradually the people left the reading room, until Elizabeth and Nina were left alone with him. The noise of the train was considerable, and yet Tom could hear what they said to each other. He wanted to look up from his magazine towards them, but he thought that he, too, was being watched by a pair of bright black eyes, even if they did not look his way.

"How do you spell 'symmetry', Elizabeth?" he heard Nina ask. "Has it one or two 'm's' and is there an 'i' or an 'e' in it?"

"I should say one 'm'," replied Elizabeth, "as for the 'i' and the 'e', I don't know. 'E's' and 'i's' look alike, and if you don't make a dot, why it can be taken for either. What are you using a word like that for?"

"I'm writing to Katherine, and I was saying that the symmetry of our stateroom was fine."

"Oh!" Elizabeth ejaculated, and then she continued looking at her magazine.

Tom could not help but smile inwardly. He would have liked to say that the word had

two 'm's' and an 'e', but he did not dare. The quietness that followed was broken soon after by two men who could be heard talking before they were seen. The first was large-bodied and had a large voice to correspond. He seemed to be acting as a guide.

"Here we are, Al, at the end of the train," he said to his friend, equally corpulent and noticeable. "This is the observation car. See! here are comfortable chairs, newspapers, magazines, a book case, writing desk and everything except a bar."

Elizabeth and her friend seemed to shrink together at the roughness of these men. Tom frowned.

"I tell you, Al, travelling's pretty comfortable these ere days. Why, I can remember the time when you used to bump across the country, days late, and nearly starved to death. Now you can do any damned thing except play billiards and roll ten-pins."

Al only nodded his head with a questioning "yes?"

"Look back here," said the one who did all the talking, dragging Al to the door. "That's where you sit and see the scenery. Well, I'll be damned if there ain't a car attached to the

train. Some high muck-a-muck going west, I suppose. Can you read that name on the door? My eyes won't go that far."

Al could read the name easily, and he said, "It's Mariposa."

"Mariposa, hey? Why that's the Larkin car, the president of the road!"

Al did not seem to care whose car it was, and he sat down near Tom. Elizabeth did not look up, but Nina took hold of her arm.

"I'll bet you a good round five dollar gold piece, Al, that that's Larkin's car," he said, sitting down beside his friend.

"It may be," Al replied, "but when Larkin came to Arizona last year, he had a car called 'San' something or other."

"Did he?"

"Yep. I'd say you're wrong, but I won't bet," Al replied taking up a newspaper. He turned to the financial news and said, "Say, Beef, I see this railroad stock's down two points."

"It's going lower, too. The whole market's soft. It wouldn't surprise me to see everything selling thirty to forty points lower before long."

"What's the reason?"

"Reason? Why, there ain't no reason for stocks going up or down."

At that moment the brakeman entered from the private car and walked through the room. The man called 'Beef' bent over and nudging him on the arm, said, "Say, ain't that car Larkin's?"

"Yes, sir," the brakeman replied.

"Didn't I tell you, Al? It looks as if the drinks were on you. Come on! let's go to the smoking car."

Al did not object, and the two went forward.

CHAPTER IV

Here was a condition upon which Tom had not calculated. To have his surprise blurted out by a loud mouthed westerner in such a way disturbed his equilibrium. It was bad enough to hear that the railroad stock had tumbled two points, for that meant a loss to his father of two hundred thousand dollars. He felt that he himself ought to have discovered that the stock market had been weak that day. Another thing he thought, that if the loud man's judgment on the stocks was of any account a drop of thirty or forty points more would mean a further loss to his father of three or four million dollars. But he soon dismissed these thoughts, depressing as they might be, for he could do nothing to help conditions in the stock market. What he would try to do was to alleviate the embarrassment that he knew Elizabeth and her friend Nina felt.

Nina had stopped writing, and the shock of

the news that she was in a private car had loosened Elizabeth's hold on the magazine so that it had fallen to the floor. To jump and pick it up so far away Tom thought looked a little forward, and there the magazine lay as it had fallen. One thing pleased Tom, they had not noticed that he belonged to that car.

"I thought that that stateroom was a little out of the ordinary," Nina said softly.

"Yes, and the 'L' on the towels did not stand for 'ladies' or 'last' either. It looks to me as if Catherine Larkin is playing one of her jokes on us. I wonder if that man smoking next to us was Mr. Larkin himself. It was rude in me anyway to tell the porter to ask him to stop, even if it were an ordinary car."

"Didn't Catherine say that she had a good-looking cousin?"

"Yes. Perhaps it was he. Nina, I can't think that our being moved into that car was a natural sequence of circumstances. What ought we to do?"

"Why, there's nothing to do but just submit and wait for developments."

"Yes, but it's extremely embarrassing to be a guest of the Larkins without some sort

of an introduction. I'm sure, Catherine's at the bottom of it all."

For a moment Tom thought that he could make his cousin the cause of their predicament. He knew that she would enjoy such a thing, but he soon changed his mind when he heard Nina say, "It's all very well to blame it on her, but you did not write to her that you were going west until the day you bought your tickets. I tell you how it is, Mr. Larkin looked on the list of the passengers and he saw our names."

"Nina, that's foolish. Just as if Mr. Larkin cared who went over his line. He's too busy a man to go prying around state-rooms of a parlor car. Then, too, our names did not appear on the list."

"That's so," Nina said, mystified.

"You'd better not finish that letter to Catherine until you know where you stand. The best thing to do is to go to bed and dream over it. It's growing late too, and nearly everybody is asleep."

Tom felt guilty of doing something that he ought not to do, sitting there and listening to their efforts to unravel their difficulties. He detested an eavesdropper, and here he was,

acting the part of one. He could not help but laugh at his desire to hear no more after there could be no more said by either of them. They had both risen, and he was on the point of excusing and introducing himself when he looked towards the private car and he saw Mary about to leave it. To have her meet them now would destroy every hope of becoming friends, and Tom jumped to his feet, uttered a hasty excuse and hurried through the door, leaving them still more surprised.

Mary, however, had seen him jump to his feet, and thinking something must be wrong, retreated. Tom's "go back and don't come out until they're in their room," was said in one word, but she understood what she was to do, and she went back into the drawing-room. Tom returned immediately to the observation car, and so quick had been his movements that he found Elizabeth and Nina only at the door.

"Pardon me," he said most politely, "Will you please allow me to introduce myself. I am Mr. Larkin, Catherine's cousin. I believe you are Miss Johnson, and you are Miss Willets."

Elizabeth was not as embarrassed as was

Nina, and she replied, "I'm very glad to meet you, Mr. Larkin, Catherine has spoken about you."

Nina smiled an acquiescence.

The moment's pause that followed seemed like an hour to them all.

"My mother and I," he said, "are on our way to California. She did not want you to know that you were her guests until tomorrow morning."

"Then we are to thank your mother for her goodness in giving us accommodations."

Tom could not say "no" to a question asked so sweetly, and he said "yes".

"It's very kind of her, indeed," said Nina now somewhat composed.

"Not at all," Tom replied. "The rough westerner broke up all our plans. It's strange how our wills and the will of Fate don't always agree."

"That's true," replied Elizabeth. "Miss Willets and I were to spend a few weeks with Catherine, but Father telegraphed for me to come home."

"Won't you sit down?" he asked as the train gave a lurch to one side and nearly tossed them all together.

Nina seemed willing, but Elizabeth replied, "We are a little tired, thank you, Mr. Larkin. We have had a busy day, and came very near losing the train. We were in the country, and as luck would have it, the automobile broke down on the way to town. Please excuse us for this evening."

"Then you will take breakfast with Mother and me tomorrow morning? It is served in our car."

At first they hesitated to accept, but he finally persuaded them, and saying a 'good-night' they left him alone.

Tom sat down, and crossing his legs and weaving his fingers over his knee, began to criticise himself. He did not want to acknowledge to himself that he had made his plans badly. His confidence in himself was never very strong. It had been weakened however by many refusals of editors to publish his books unless he paid for their publication, and even the encouragement that he had received from them, saying that he wrote above the readers of the day, did not increase his self-esteem. But paying the publishers and hearing their praise did not bring in money, and Tom knew that the judgment of men smote

hard a man who could not earn a dollar somehow. He thought that on that day he had made another failure in planning to meet Miss Johnson.

"She is, indeed, beautiful," he said to himself. In fact, she was one of the prettiest girls he had ever seen. But beauty, however, was not attractive to him unless there went with it a keen wit, a well-read mind and an appreciation of music. Had Elizabeth Johnson those qualities?

So far he thought that she had not displayed much of anything. But he could not judge anybody on such an acquaintance, and he began to think over what she had said. He wondered why Governor Johnson had telegraphed for his daughter. Then he remembered his father saying that morning that the Governor was an old-fashioned, honest man. "Can it be," he thought, "that he does not want his daughter seen with the Larkins until the important paper that he has found is settled one way or another? If that is so, what will he say when he learns that she was with the president's wife and son?" He thought of Elizabeth's refusal to remain and talk to him, but he soon justified her in that action.

To excuse himself quickly, to bolt out of the car, and to rush back and then relax into a polite condition of mind, was not the usual stamp of sanity. "That must be explained somehow, but how?" he said to himself.

"Yes, there's a lot to explain," he thought, "and there's a lot of lies to be told in order to smooth over everything. But I'll come out, somehow."

Then he began to feel uneasy about the condition of the stockmarket. To carry one hundred thousand shares on a falling market and not show uneasiness, Tom thought, that his father must possess a heart of steel. He picked up the paper that the man from Arizona had thrown down, and he looked at the closing quotation and at the numbers of shares sold. His eye soon found his father's railroad stock, and he saw that there were over two hundred thousand shares traded in that particular one. Now that his father had confided in him by telling him of his wealth and of the danger that confronted the railroad company, Tom felt that it was due him to know if his father were buying or selling stock. To telegraph, he feared, would cause suspicion, and he sat down at the desk and wrote a letter

to him. When he had finished, he heard the door close, and looking around, he saw his servant Fred. He was the bearer of a message from "Miss Johnsing," as he called her, and it was not a very hopeful one, for it made Tom go back and consult with his mother.

CHAPTER V

Elizabeth Johnson did not know exactly what to think of Mrs. Larkin's hospitality. In the first place she was always very careful about accepting invitations from anyone. To be a debtor, even to a friend, was something that she did not relish. Now, to be the guest of a lady whom she did not know somewhat disturbed her equanimity of mind. Force of circumstance was all right as an excuse, but she thought that there had been too much force used in the circumstance this time, and she told her friend Nina so when they were in their stateroom.

"Nina," she said, "I don't know how you feel about being in the Larkin's car, but I don't like it."

"It strikes me, that we are rather lucky."

"I am beginning to fear that it's too lucky. In fact, Nina, I don't think that there's any luck about it. Things don't dovetail right. First of all, we buy tickets, then we find a

maid occupying our room. We are transferred to this car, and are given the idea that it is an ordinary sleeping-car. Then the porter tries to hide from us that the car is a private one. It looks to me like a premeditated scheme of somebody, and if Catherine Larkin isn't back of it all, I shall be offended in a way."

"You seem to be suspicious."

"Yes, I am suspicious. Tom Larkin sat there and listened to us talking and he would not have introduced himself if the two men had not discovered that the Mariposa was the Larkin's car. Even then he sat there until he saw somebody leaving the car, and he bolted back and forward like a rubber ball. I'd like to know who that was he kept from meeting us."

"Couldn't you see?"

"Not exactly. It was a woman, though, I'm sure."

"It couldn't have been Mrs. Larkin, could it?"

"No. It was somebody whom Tom Larkin did not want us to see. Don't you see that there is really something suspicious about our being here?"

"I don't think so. The Larkins must be nice people. They would do nothing to embarrass you or me. Mrs. Larkin, you know, is one of Chicago's best, and Elizabeth, I will trust myself in her hands without an objection."

"Nina, you always were too trustful."

"No, I am careful, too. I've yet to be deceived in my judgment."

"Then you feel as comfortable as if you were invited on the car a week ahead."

"Not exactly that, but I don't think we are doing wrong in staying here."

"Well, I don't say that I am wrong in being a little concerned. But there's father."

"Surely your father can trust you, Elizabeth."

"Oh, it's not that. Ever since he has been governor, he wants me to be very careful how I associate with people who have large interests in the state. Father is very particular, over-particular, Nina, and do you know, I think that just because this railroad runs through the state he does not want me to be too intimate with Catherine Larkin. To have the name of Larkin and Johnson coupled together in a social way, he fears would be some

sort of a blotch on his clean record. He hasn't said that, but I feel that he means it."

"Well, you're to be pitied. I suppose, then, he objects to me because my father controls the gas companies in San Francisco, and is a large banker."

"Gas is different from railroads, Nina. The one you know is for a city, while the other is for a state. Railroads you know, buy up people. Your father would never do that."

"I don't believe he would, but he has been accused of doing it. But I don't see why our friends must be ruled by our father's business. Honest as our fathers are, Elizabeth, they have both been slandered by the papers. But I'm willing to do whatever you say. What shall it be, get off somewhere and take the next train?"

"No, not that; but we can take breakfast alone, and give as an excuse that we were fond of rising early, and that we did not wish to annoy Mrs. Larkin."

"That wouldn't look right, after we have accepted Mr. Larkin's invitation."

"Yes, but he did not set the hour."

"I know he didn't. People like the Larkins I'm sure, rise early. Didn't Catherine say

that her uncle was at his office at eight every morning?"

"Yes, but on a train I should say that they had breakfast at nine. Let's ask the porter."

"She was about to press the electric button when her friend interrupted her.

"Don't ring! You'll wake up Mrs. Larkin."

"That's so. Then I'll go out and see if I can't find him."

She went out in the hallway and found Fred standing in the kitchen doorway. He was cautioned to speak the truth this time, and he informed her that breakfast was to be served at nine o'clock. That pleased her, and she told him to present her compliments to Mrs. Larkin, in the morning, and say that, as she and her friend Miss Willets did not wish to put her to any trouble and as they breakfasted early, they would take their meal in the dining car.

This was the message that the porter took to Tom.

CHAPTER VI

Next morning as the sun rose over the horizon and looked into the windows of Elizabeth Johnson's stateroom, it caught her and her friend busily dressing. They both seemed satisfied with their plan to eat their breakfast in the dining car, and they tried to prepare themselves without making any noise whatever. Such a mode of dressing, however, made them over-anxious, and brushes seemed to take life and deliberately fall upon the floor, striking the woodwork on their way. The lurching of the car at one time threw Nina against the door of Tom's room, and as he was half-asleep, he called out, "who's there"? The limit of caution was reached when Elizabeth herself dropped a bottle of perfume upon the mosaic floor of the wash room. The noise of the crash brought Fred to the door, and he asked if he could be of any assistance. Elizabeth coughed a "no, thank you," because the fumes of the triple extract nearly gagged her.

Their situation struck Nina finally as very amusing, and she began to laugh. Fred continued to knock, and Elizabeth opened the door. When he informed her that Mrs. Larkin had concluded, as the train was to arrive early in Kansas City, to eat breakfast at eight, instead of nine, Nina could not restrain herself from laughing aloud.

"What was that Mr. Larkin said last evening?" she asked, "Our will and the will of Fate don't agree, do they?"

"Nina," replied Elizabeth, reprovingly, "I do not see anything funny at all. I'm sorry, now, that we gave up our room so easily. We are not really sure that this is the Larkin's car, and I don't like the idea of floating about and accepting hospitality from anyone who offers it."

"Then you don't think that we met Tom Larkin last night? Why, Elizabeth, if you keep on with your suspicions, you'll have us both captured and sent to some sultan or other. Not a bit of it! That was Tom Larkin; this is the Larkin's car, and we are the Larkin's guests, whether we want to be or no."

They concluded that there could be no polite way of declining Mrs. Larkin's invitation, and they continued to dress slowly, so as

not to appear in the drawing room until the hour for breakfast. Promptly on the minute they entered timidly, and they found Mrs. Larkin and Tom waiting for them. All their fears of intrusion, of doubt, and of embarrassment were driven away by the gracious manner in which Mrs. Larkin received them. Tom even made an impression far better than he had done the evening before, and so smoothly were the introductions made that the first entrance into the domain of conversation with strangers was as pleasant as it possibly could be for Elizabeth and Nina. Fred's susceptible nature was touched by the overflow of feeling, and gave symptoms of losing control of himself for a large laugh showed itself in his voice when he said, "Breakfast is served, Missus Larkin."

"What a nice little party this makes," Mrs. Larkin said, as they took their places at the square table. Elizabeth sat opposite her with Tom at her right. "The tedious ride across Kansas we can spend in playing cards."

Nina waited a moment for Elizabeth to make a reply. Not hearing one, she said, "It's certainly more comfortable travelling this way."

Mrs. Larkin then asked if they were going to San Francisco or to the Southern part of California. This time Elizabeth replied, saying they were to remain a few days at the Grand Cañon, and then possibly a few days at Pasadena; then they were to go to Sacramento.

"How fortunate," Tom remarked, "We are going to the Grand Cañon, also."

This was the first time Mrs. Larkin knew of that plan, but she did not object.

"You have never seen it?" Elizabeth asked.

"Oh, yes!" Tom replied, "But the Grand Cañon is always new and fresh. It is like the ocean, ever young and full of mystery."

"I hope you are not in a hurry to reach there," said Mrs. Larkin. "There is a rule that no private car can be attached to the Limited, and we are to be transferred to another train at Kansas City."

"Oh, no! We're in no hurry," Nina replied, without giving Elizabeth a chance to speak to the contrary.

Tom saw her wish to take exception to Nina, and he said, "Miss Johnson, I'm very glad to hear that. Are your trunks checked to the Grand Cañon?"

He learned with some satisfaction that they

were. Then came one of those embarrassing questions that he feared must be answered.

"Mrs. Larkin," Elizabeth said, "how did you know that we were on the train?"

Mrs. Larkin looked at her son for the reply, but he had already begun to answer.

"Miss Johnson," he said, "the girls of Farmington, my cousin Catherine tells me, are very good in reading behind sealed books. At least, she tells me that some of the girls there studied their lessons with books closed. Not that I class you and your friend, Miss Willetts, among them, but I think that it is useless for mother and me to tell you how we learned that you were here."

Tom felt happy over the manner in which he had evaded that question, and Mrs. Larkin seemed pleased.

"Elizabeth and I," Nina replied, "have already come to the conclusion that Catherine Larkin is at the bottom of it all! She is always playing some surprise upon us—nice ones, too—and we think this is one of them."

"At school," Elizabeth added, "Catherine was blamed for a great many things, and whenever anything out of the ordinary took place, we always used to say, 'a Larkin was the

cause of it,' and I feel that a Larkin is the cause of our being invited to join you."

At this, Mrs. Larkin smiled sweetly, and Tom began to suspect that Elizabeth had another meaning than the one his mother thought was meant. The idea began to dawn within him that his little scheme to meet Miss Johnson might develop into a great disappointment, especially when Mary would be obliged to give up her stateroom in the other car and come back with them. But he prided himself on his power to extricate himself from predicaments, and the one he saw before him did not appear insurmountable. What he desired more than anything else was to have Elizabeth to himself, to draw from her some of her views of life, to talk with her of her opinions and beliefs, to learn what was behind her pretty face, to feel the influence of her heart on his, or to know if his heart could touch hers. The breakfast table was no place to find out these things, although he did learn that she was a girl of qualities superior to those of her friend Nina. While his mother entertained them, he studied the faces of both the girls. Elizabeth's always wore a shadow of seriousness that Nina's never possessed. Miss John-

son's eyes were not less bright than her friend's, but they possessed a more dreamy look, just the kind, Tom felt, that reflected a soul fond of music and poetry.

When breakfast was over, the train began to enter the suburbs of Kansas City. It had been midnight when the Limited crossed the Mississippi river, but when it crossed the Missouri, and passed near its banks, Tom Larkin looked upon that wide river, not with the eye of a surveyor, or the feelings of an engineer, but more like an ancient Greek. In the classic days, no river, no stream, no brook of Greece lacked its poet to sing its praises. Here, before Tom, was a river that had been looked upon only as muddy, shallow and riotous. Before the edge of the town had been reached, he had said that the Missouri was to him worthy of a song in verse, and he was glad to hear Elizabeth reply that the natural glory of the United States was yet to be sung.

This agreement with one of his cherished desires made Tom even more anxious than ever to talk with her alone. Mrs. Larkin thought that she saw in Tom a satisfaction which he had lacked for many days. She could attribute it only to the presence of the

two guests, and, as she saw him especially attentive to Elizabeth, she tried to aid him in her good, motherly way. When the train stopped at the station, she succeeded in taking Nina under her care, and with Tom and Elizabeth following them, they took a short walk into the city. Their absence from the car gave Fred a very good chance to arrange for Mary's transfer from the Limited, and when they returned, the maid was carefully secluded in the room adjoining Mrs. Larkin's.

So far, everything had progressed in a manner entirely satisfactory to Tom. He could not help but show to his mother his feeling of exhilaration, when the train started on its journey west. Mrs. Larkin's motherly instinct again came to his help, and Nina agreeing to a game of piquet, Tom and Elizabeth took a position on the observation platform, the reason he gave being that the scenery could be seen better there.

CHAPTER VII

"Scenery in Kansas?" questioned Elizabeth, when she and Tom had seated themselves upon comfortable chairs. "I never heard it called that before, in Kansas."

"It is not too good a word, Miss Johnson. Kansas has been deformed by deep railroad cuts the plough, the telegraph poles, and the fences but even with all those defects, to me it has its attractions. I like everything that nature does. These long, sweeping mounds that we are passing, whose edges touch one another in melting lines are not unattractive. Each cornfield with its dead stalks is different. Some people call Kansas monotonous. It is not so to me. The constellations in the heavens are not monotonous, because they have their mystery and are far away. The cornfields here have their mystery to me, and because they are near, I like them more."

"Mr. Larkin, then you do not tire of things that are seen every day?"

"I did not say that. I tire of everything that is not true. In these corn and wheat fields, battles were waged last summer that have an interest to me. I find them a great mystery."

"Then there are mysteries in an ordinary cornfield?" she asked, more amused than interested.

"There are mysteries everywhere. Do you see that stalk there with a swollen ear of corn? It is called a diseased ear by some."

"Oh, yes, I've studied about that at school. Everything is a disease that attacks and destroys."

"I don't think so."

"Why, Mr. Larkin! Do you mean to say that the smut which killed that ear of corn is not harmful?"

"No. It is harmful to the ear of corn. To the smut itself, it is victory. It is a triumph. Now you see what I mean by saying that battles have been fought in these cornfields. The wheat has its rusts; corn its smut; all plants, their moulds and parasites. Why?"

Elizabeth now appeared interested. The word "why" appeared to her too large to be

conquered. She replied, "Because it's the nature of things."

"Yes, and more, because they are necessary."

"I would not say that, Mr. Larkin."

"But it is true."

In the short pause that followed, both seemed to be thinking deeply. Elizabeth was surprised at such a statement. She would have liked to combat it, but it was said in such an impressive way that, for the moment, she could not take an opposite stand. It seemed strange to hear anyone take such a view of disease. She did not object to hear a new idea, in fact she relished anything that would awaken her intellect that, since her school days, had been allowed to doze away at balls, dinners and card parties. Usually her men friends amused her with new slang, with a snatch from a comic opera, with a funny story, with experiences, which after all, had only brought a smile and nothing more. To listen to Tom Larkin, trying to make interesting "old tiresome Kansas" as she called it, was something novel, and she began to take an interest in the long state that she never had before.

"Why is it true, Mr. Larkin, that these things which attack are necessary?" she asked.

"They are necessary because what is called evil is necessary."

"Oh, I can't believe that."

"But why should I air my beliefs on a meeting like this. I am different from most fellows. I have never done a hard day's work, that is, what people in America call work. I have not yet felt that joy in earning a dollar, for it must be a great joy to rub money together. But making money has gotten to be a mania. Men are crazy these days. They burn their lives out to pile dollar upon dollar. And they break their hearts, their minds, and their wills in the struggle. I am not an earner. I am a spectator. I watch my friends panting in the stock and produce exchanges. They take their stimulants for lunch. They play bridge between office and dinner with more stimulants. Their dinners must be expensive, appetising, and need to be washed down with wine. After that, cards or vulgarity at the theatre, must awaken their drowsy senses. It's wrong, all wrong!"

"But they have an aim in life, Mr. Larkin."

"Yes, money. But that should not be the main goal of life. I admit that there is joy in the struggle for glory, but can glory only be acquired in amassing great wealth? My father is extolled by men of business. His mind can comprehend at a glance, what others can never see. Miss Johnson, he and I are as far apart as the two poles. My aim is to write a book that will move the country. I care not for financial success. If only a few hundred thinking men and women say, "It is good," I am content."

"Then you have an aim, and it's a good one."

"I'm glad to hear you say that. My father, I fear, thinks it is degrading. Our fathers, Miss Johnson, never tell us what they truly think of us."

"That's true. Miss Willetts has told me something that father has said about me, that I could hardly believe."

"Your father is also a man of business, I believe."

"Yes, he, too, is esteemed by many people in California. He is a strict man, very religious, and limits his speculation only to real estate. He owns a great deal of property

bordering along your father's railroad, I believe."

"Are you sure of that?" Tom asked, quickly.

"He never told me, but others have. Why?"

"Land has gone up so in price, that was all. Has he very much?"

"Miss Willett's father says that he must have over a hundred thousand acres. I wish it were true."

"Why?"

"Why, Mr. Larkin, I have a desire, perhaps a disease, of wanting a new house, an automobile and, yes—I will tell you, a few fine jewels."

"Desires are not diseases, Miss Johnson."

"But they ruin you if you don't fight them," she laughed.

"They make you unhappy if you do fight them. In that they differ from disease."

"Oh, yes! but Mr. Larkin, are they necessary?"

"Of course they are necessary. Life is necessary, but it is not a disease."

She laughed less at that idea.

"And the desire of one heart for another is necessary, but Miss Johnson, you would not call love an affliction, would you?"

"Well, I don't know. An overdose some-

times causes complications, and Mr. Larkin, it sometimes has produced death. Look at Romeo, Juliet, and all those poor souls who were its victims."

"Oh, if you argue that way," replied Tom, thoroughly enjoying the conversation, "I can say that good itself is a disease."

"No, that's one thing that cannot be done."

"Well! Take a man who strangles every desire, who shuts the door to every pleasure, who denies the body its necessities, who makes of self a slave, who, in fact, becomes a thorough Christian, you might say. What happens? He withers up, becomes a monk, I mean one of the pious kind."

"That's an exception."

"Yes, but how about the martyrs who died for being good?"

"Mr. Larkin, you don't argue fairly."

"No?"

"No. Who ever heard of good being a bad thing?"

"Well, then, take Kansas, good old Kansas."

"All right," she said, a little piqued.

"You admit it is a good state. It raises wheat, corn, and all kinds of cattle and so forth."

"Yes."

"And yet you think that it is flat, monotonous, void of poetry, and all that?"

"Yes, but that's not being bad."

"No. But you would not live in Kansas?"

"Of course not."

"Now isn't that bad for Kansas?"

"Mr. Larkin," she said, with a smile, "you are incorrigible. You can take hold of anything and make it in some way, either right or wrong."

"That is really one of my greatest faults." Tom replied sadly. "I see both sides to almost everything. I'm a skeptic. I differ with those who say everything is all good. I differ with those who say everything is all evil. I detest and like myself at times."

"Everybody does that, Mr. Larkin."

"Then you, too, stand between extremes."

"No, not exactly. I see mostly good in life."

"Then I would not change your idea for the world. But yet—" she hesitated.

"Continue," she urged him.

"Not to-day. I would not have you dislike me so soon."

"No one is disliked by me for what he says as much as for what he does."

For a moment he thought of how he had forced her to accept accommodations in the private car. After their short time together, he began to feel that she would resent such a thing. He admired her more than ever, as he watched her from time to time. The expressions of displeasure and delight, as they played over her face, the movement of her head, her gestures, the intonation of her voice, her laughter, her surprise, all had an especial attraction to him on that morning.

"I am glad that you will allow me to talk freely," he said. "To be hindered by the thought that what I say would offend, is certainly a wall that is hard to climb over. Strange, however, as my ideas may appear, I see beauty almost everywhere."

"You have given these fields an interest but they cannot be clothed with beauty."

"Why not?"

"In the first place, nothing seems to be alive. Dried out corn stalks do not add to the landscape. Then, too, there can be no beauty in the outlines of windmills and barns!"

"Miss Johnson, when we passed the Mis-

souri river at breakfast Miss Willetts said, 'look at the mud.' Do you remember what I replied?"

"Yes, and it was a strange reply. 'Even mud has its attractions!' I did not think much about it then, but now it has a different meaning."

"The Indian who once inhabited these immense plains called that river the 'Missouri'. It means 'muddy water!' They, too, saw only the dirt. But that river has had its romance, its history, and, yes, I suppose its tragedies. Like the river of life which is not all pure, which carries its sediment also, it began with the limpid spring, and it merges finally into the great Mississippi which finally loses itself in the clear ocean. Is it not a beautiful thought that water, like life, has a way of purifying itself. The Missouri river hides its still muddied bottom. It reflects, its ripples take the rays from the moon and stars and weave cobwebs of light. The happy light of the sun is broken upon the surface of those waters into innumerable smiles of fire."

Elizabeth experienced a pleasure in hearing him extol the beauty of the Missouri river.

She was surprised that the stream of muddy water could inspire poetic feelings in anyone.

"Yes," she said, "that may be true of the river, but what of this flat country?"

"I'm afraid, Miss Johnson, you are like most Americans. They see beauty only in Italy, France, Switzerland and Germany. And yet the foreigners wonder why we go there and rave over what they see every day. When I was in Algiers I went to the Sahara, and in an oasis the greatest surprise of the Berbers was why I had gone there. The United States can excel Europe in everything except historical associations, Miss Johnson. Here in Kansas the Indians have had their struggles, but they have not yet become classic. It requires death to become great. Perhaps when they are all pushed under the sod we will appreciate their stolid natures."

"You still hesitate to praise the beauty of Kansas, Mr. Larkin," she said, feeling that his mind was groping about trying to find ideas with which to make the dirt of Kansas attractive.

"I hesitate because there is so much to say, Miss Johnson. I do not know where to begin.

It is difficult to be serious over a state that has been caricatured in almost every way. But listen! It has its meadow larks, whose song can be heard over the rumbling of the train. Kansas too, is an Indian name. It means, 'land of the winds.' That alone makes it a country of mystery. Even they are grand. They carry harvests or destruction; and this earth which you call dead contains, if not life itself, the substance that makes life possible. Miss Johnson, those immense curves, those crevices like the lines on a titanic hand, those deep gullies that are too tortuous to be called joyous, those small mounds which are the blemishes perhaps on a face of beauty, those little streams that we pass over like veins on an immense leaf, those things receive the gracious smiles of the sun as do the sublime mountains, the arid desert and the grand ocean. And the moon is not less kind to this country than to others. She lavishes her silvery light here as everywhere else in the world. Are you less kind with your appreciation? The black-eyed maids of Italy, the Spaniard, the Indian and Arabic are all different, but beauty touches here and there a face that outshines the others. Kansas, the

land of the winds, named by the Indians, has that beauty which requires the lifting of a veil to be appreciated."

"Mr. Larkin, I wish I had your imagination. The trip from Chicago to California would not be so tiresome if I had. When I went East a few months ago, I gave a sigh of relief when the journey was over. Then Miss Willetts and I played solitaire to pass away the time. Imagination can do almost anything."

"It is one of my greatest pleasures."

"It is a cheap enjoyment, too," she added with a smile.

"Yes, it is a quality that requires a wealth of it to enjoy cheap things."

"Tell me! How did you imagine that Miss Willetts and I would enjoy sharing this private car with you?"

"Then you are enjoying it?"

"To tell you the truth I am. I hate to be a burden to anyone, and I hate still more to be indebted to anyone. But still riding in a private car has a charm that a drawing room lacks. I don't see yet how your mother knew that we were going to California. I really think it is your duty to tell me. Do

you know the lady or maid I think she was, who had our room? Weren't you the man who walked through the car when we learned that we had no accommodations?"

"Yes, I did pass through the car. I saw your predicament, and knowing that you would not accept my invitation at that time, suggested to the conductor that he give you the room you now have."

"Was that really it?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you offer the room to the other lady?"

"Miss Johnson, I hope you are not sorry that you are here?"

"Of course not. I only want to get everything straight. It looks to me like a joke or trick of some kind, and yet I ought not to call it that. I should like to know who the woman was."

Until that time Tom was not sure that Elizabeth had not recognized Mary the evening before. He had already warned her not to show herself, and had cautioned his mother not to call her. To hear Elizabeth speak as she did of the woman who had taken her stateroom made him feel that in his enthusi-

asm of the moment he had mistaken dishonesty for a practical joke. He began to think that he had taken an unfair advantage over her, and yet he could not summon up enough courage at that moment to tell her the truth. He looked in at his mother and she still seemed to be enjoying the game of piquet. Nina, however, did not appear happy.

"Does Miss Willett's face express displeasure or enjoyment, Miss Johnson?" he asked, glad at an opportunity to divert her mind from the thing which now seemed to hide all sorts of difficulties.

"That is her losing face," she said, smiling.
"Are you a good loser, Mr. Larkin?"

"At cards?" he asked.

"At anything," was her reply.

"I have not played much at stocks, or at love either, so Catherine says. At cards I lose with the ease of anyone who is having his purse robbed. Strange to say I have the superstition of most gamblers, especially in cards, that is, I vow before I play that everything I win shall go to charity, or to the church. Even that does not change my luck. Fortune always passes me by and awards her crown of favor to others."

"That's just how she treats me."

"Why, are you unlucky, too?"

"Unlucky! Why, Mr. Larkin, I lose at everything. I buy things just before they are marked down. My jewels have a habit of taking wings and flying, dear knows where. The best shoemaker sells me his worst pair of shoes. Oh, in fact, everywhere I meet the same rebuff. Even last evening, I lost a stateroom."

"Yes, but you found another."

"I know, but how?"

It seemed that everything led to that circumstance. Miss Willetts again came to Tom's rescue, for she had risen and had walked to the door. He invited her and his mother to come out and join them, and that for a time deferred the question that he knew must be answered soon.

CHAPTER VIII

"One would think, Elizabeth," said Nina as they were preparing for dinner that evening, "that you and Tom Larkin had known each other all your lives, the way you buzz and chat."

"Why, I don't see anything unusual, Nina, in my attitude toward him."

"Of course not. I don't mind playing piquet with Mrs. Larkin and letting you two sit out on the back platform talking about dear knows what, but I do object to having Mrs. Larkin for a partner in bridge. Why did you make me play with her every game after lunch? She is a dandy woman, and all that, but Elizabeth, her game of bridge is not as good as her social reputation. The next time we play we cut for partners. Tom Larkin plays like a professional. He knows everything about the game, and he seems to know too much of everything, anyway."

"Why, what do you mean, Nina?"

"Well, I don't know. He makes you feel as if your grammar was out of shape, as if the language you used didn't fit well. He makes me feel uncomfortable."

"You ought to hear him talk about that Missouri river and this state. Goodness! where he finds the words I don't know."

"Did he make fun of them?"

"Not at all. He thinks they are beautiful."

"Beautiful! Kansas beautiful! Why he's crazy. Who ever saw an atom of beauty in a dirty, nasty, muddy river and a country as flat as your hand?"

"Well, he sees it. I wish I could tell you what he said this morning."

"What do you mean? Can't you confide in me? Has he gone that far?"

"Oh, I don't mean that. I mean I wish I could remember what he said. He's original, Nina. He has a vivid imagination, and—"

"Much love—Elizabeth?"

"Nina, you always think that when a girl sits for an hour or so with a man that he is making love."

"Well, I think Tom Larkin is. He's over-polite with his, 'may I play, Miss Johnson,'

and 'allow me to deal the cards for you.' I hate to have a man do that. I'll deal my own cards in that game. But you sat there with your hands in your lap looking as pretty as I don't know what, and he was taking you in from your waist up. Once he rested his eyes on me. They didn't stay long. If I didn't know you better, Elizabeth, and if I didn't know that you had known him only a day, I should say that you had passed that old vestibule of friendship."

"Why, Nina, that's absurd. Mr Larkin is an unusual man. I don't think that he loves anybody. A man who thinks the way he does loves only spasmodically. I would say just as we read the other day about Raphael. I feel that he's a genius. But we'll see."

"A genius? Whoever heard of a railroad president's son being a genius! There is no work in them. They frivol away their time in college, go to Europe, bet on races and all that, entertain well, make love passably well, and then turn out bad."

"That's not so. Mr. Larkin has an object in life. He is going to write a book—and then look out!"

"I will."

There was a short pause, and Elizabeth said, "I tell you that there is more in Mr. Larkin than there is in most men."

"I am not saying that Mr. Larkin is like the other presidents' sons."

"No, but you insinuate, and Tom Larkin is not the kind to drift away to the bad."

"I know now that you admire him."

"I don't admire him, I appreciate in him certain qualities that—that—"

"That what?"

"That shine. It is not right to criticise without knowing him."

"One thing, Elizabeth, you never were overly fond of men, but now you seem to champion Tom Larkin. Because he held four honors in his hand—hearts, too—twice at one sitting, he has won you completely. Why, that's luck."

"He is not lucky," she said, remembering what he said that morning. "He usually loses at cards."

"Yes, but he hadn't you for a partner."

This was said as Nina opened the door, and Elizabeth did not have time to form a reply. She did say as they went through the passage

way, "Now behave yourself," which reached Tom's sharp ears. He and his mother were waiting for them. The remark meant nothing to him, but he made it a point of asking in what manner Miss Willetts had not behaved.

"She always sees the ludicrous in everything," Elizabeth replied. "She is a bad enemy and a good friend."

At dinner Mrs. Larkin proved that she deserved the name of a charming hostess. Her ease, her humor, her power of making Elizabeth and Nina comfortable, made them feel as if they had known her a much longer time than only a day. Everything passed smoothly until at the end of the meal when Mrs. Larkin said to Fred, "Go to Mary and ask her for my light wrap."

The look that Tom gave her did not disconcert her in the least. Mary was a forbidden topic, and Tom, feeling that something must be done to explain Mary's absence said, "Mother's maid suffers very badly from car sickness."

Mrs. Larkin had won her position in society by being tactful. She had her enemies, like other social leaders, but those whom she made her friends had always found her most

honest and faithful in even the small things of life. She had not approved of her son's way of forcing an acquaintance with Elizabeth and Nina, but she had humored him, thinking that there would not be anything out of the way in having them with her. Now Mary was not car-sick, but she did not wish to contradict Tom before her guests. The glance, however, that she gave him showed him that she was displeased. The incident did not, as he had feared arouse suspicion in the young ladies' minds. As his mother did not like cigar smoke in her drawing room, he asked Elizabeth if she would join him out upon the observation platform.

Elizabeth would have accepted immediately if Nina had not teased her about her admiration, not so much for Tom himself, as for his qualities that shone. Like most sensations that cannot be fully analyzed, she could not define those qualities that Tom possessed, but she did know that they pleased her. She gave the excuse of its being too cool in the night air, and he then asked Nina. However, Nina did not want to appear over-pleased, and she hesitated before accepting. In a few minutes they were seated out

upon the platform, and with their chairs as far as possible under the eaves of the car. The air was cold, but neither seemed to notice it.

"Elizabeth tells me that you are in love with Kansas, Mr. Larkin, is that true?" she asked.

"I did not say that. I told her that Kansas had a beauty which most people failed to see."

"Something like a homely face that hides a good heart, I suppose."

"Yes, exactly."

"Well, I have no patience to study a thing before I like it. The first glance pleases me or it doesn't please me, and that's all there is about it. Are we in Kansas yet?"

"We are."

"Why, it's like a game of everlasting. What your father ought to do is to have the trains go through the state at night. What did you say to Miss Johnson to make her like it?"

"Then she really was influenced by what I said this morning?"

"I don't know about that, but I know that she never saw so much to enjoy in Kansas

before. Mr. Larkin, she is one of the dearest and sweetest friends I have. Of course Catherine Larkin has told you all about her."

"Not very much; only that she loved her."

"All the girls did at Farmington. Her mother died when she was a child, and she really brought herself up, you might say. Her father is a man without a heart."

"In what way, Miss Willetts?" he asked, greatly interested.

"He cares for nobody but himself. I have been at their house two weeks and he never kissed her once. Why, my father, busy as he is, finds time to love his family. But Mr. Johnson reads Latin, digs into old papers and old books, talks about his being honest until you get sick of it. A man who brags about his honesty, Mr. Larkin, is dishonest. You can overdo honesty, and he overdoes it. He has shown me the palm of his hand and has said, 'Nina, that has never done a wrong act.' That dear girl keeps house for him, and he never encourages her a bit. She's happy really when she is away from him, though she does not say it. She went to Europe with mother and me, and rich as he is, he complained about her drafts being too

high, and they were not high either. Then, too, he is strict, and everything must be done just so. Prayers in the morning, prayers at breakfast, dinner and supper, and prayers before you go to bed. And you have to get down on your knees, too. No shading your eyes in that house when you pray, you have to go at it in the good, old-fashioned way. Now, Mr. Larkin, don't think that I do not approve of saying prayers, but there is really the right and the wrong way, and Mr. Johnson goes about it the wrong way."

"How do you mean, wrong way?" Tom asked, thoroughly enjoying her light way of talking.

"Why, I mean that he doesn't take things for granted. What do you think of a man's saying, 'By this I mean, Oh Lord,' just as if God could not understand, and it took Governor Johnson of California to aid him in doing it? Why, it's a sacrilege to hear him tell the Lord what he ought to do! He's stingy, mean and strict, and what's more, he won't allow that dear sweet Elizabeth to have a man visit her. How I sympathize with her! Everybody does who knows the circumstances. She's so afraid of offending him, that she really

doesn't show her true colors before anyone except Catherine and me."

"This is indeed very interesting—go on," he urged, when she paused slightly.

"She has a fine mind, Mr. Larkin. At school she wrote the class poem, and it was written so well that a magazine published it. She knows where all pictures of any account are. Music she dotes on. Why, she can rattle off a Bach fugue better than I can a two-step. And read—why, she devours books, good ones too, history, mostly. She is just filling her mind up with all sorts of things that I call in a way useless. What is the use of learning the names of a whole string of kings and queens just so as to say who ruled a certain time? Who cares about dates these days? All anybody wants to know is a certain few, such as the time of Mary, Queen of Scots, Henry the Eighth, Napoleon, Caesar, and Catherine de Medici, and that's all. But, no, Elizabeth must know who did this, and who did that, until she is now a walking encyclopedia."

"But what about yourself, Miss Willetts?"

"Who, I? Why, I'm a satellite. No light of my own, but just full of the reflections of

other people. I have the energy of a man, but the weakness of a woman. Father says that I ought to be a laborer. Do you know why? Just because I have a workshop where I keep a box of tools, a bench and a stove."

"What for? Do you practice cooking?"

"Oh no! to boil glue and burn shavings. It's a carpenter's workshop. Somehow I like to drive nails, plane wood and make a muss—I guess you would call it. Still, if I can't sew, or cook or knit, I'm useful about the house in repairing things—"

But she did not continue. Elizabeth tapped upon the glass door and beckoned her to come inside. She appeared to be anxious that Nina should learn a new solitaire that Mrs. Larkin had shown her. Nina cared as much for solitaire as she did about history, but as Mrs. Larkin particularly admired that especial solitaire, she forced herself to appear interested.

Tom remained on the platform alone. The red lights on the back of the car from time to time reflected their rays on the passing trees. He could hear nothing in that stillness but the rumbling of the train. These things, however, did not attract him as much as his

thoughts. Quickly as they passed through his mind they spoke louder than anything else. First of all, he wondered how the stock market had closed. Had his father sold some of the stock or bought new? He thought, also, of Elizabeth's father, and he wondered if behind his honesty he was hiding his stock and real estate manipulations. Miss Willetts had not given the Governor of California an enviable reputation, but he could form no real opinion of the man. Then he thought of Elizabeth herself.

If Governor Johnson was what Nina made him out to be, he certainly sympathized with the daughter who had brought herself up. His talk with her that morning, her game of cards in the afternoon had shown him a girl who had made an impression upon him that no other girl had done. Not only did she possess a beautiful face, but, what touched his heart more, had that invisible personality that gave everything she did and said, a deeper feeling. In a way, he thought that he saw in Elizabeth some of the qualities of his mother, qualities that disappear upon specializing, but qualities that were as imperishable as the thoughts of a mind, as the

feelings of a heart. Tom could not say what it was particularly that made him admire Elizabeth, but that he did admire her, he felt sure.

The stars were shining brightly over Kansas on that evening, as the train sped along. The constellation of the winter season, the brightest constellation of the heavens, seemed more defined on those wide plains than in the streets of a city. And the sickle of a four days old moon was gathering a harvest of dreams for Tom Larkin. Would they be satisfying ones, or would they bring sorrow to his heart?

CHAPTER IX

There were no signs of life in the Mariposa when it was transferred from the Colorado Express to the Overland train at the La Junta station. There was usually an air of mystery around a private car, that made the train men work quietly when they were near one, but when they knew that the Mariposa car belonged to no other than the president of the railroad himself, they exerted themselves still more to work in silence.

The consequence was that Fred did not awaken until the train left the station. He had been ordered to buy a Denver paper there, and when he became aware of his failure to procure one, his black brow became moist, at the exertion of thinking over what he should do. It was only five o'clock and he made his way through the whole length of the train to the smoking car, where the people were in all stages of sleep except the brakeman and two passengers who had come from Denver. One of them had his breakfast tied up in

a newspaper which proved to be the edition that Fred thought would satisfy his master, and he paid twenty-five cents for it, greasy as it was. All the pressing and smoothing that he gave it could not make it appear presentable. At seven o'clock, he knocked at Mr. Larkin's door and, overflowing with apologies, handed him the desired sheet.

It did not take Tom long to find the financial column, and his heart nearly stopped beating when he read that the feeling in Wall Street had reached the panic stage, and that prices had had a great tumble. Without reading the details, his eyes sought the quotations of his father's stock, and he saw that it had closed at a decrease of five points for the day. That meant, if his father had not sold any stock since Tom had left Chicago, a loss of seven hundred thousand dollars. A few more days like that added to the announcement of the railroad's liabilities at the discovery of the old contract between it and the State of California, would mean ruin not only to his father, but to the railroad itself. He read the details of the day's transactions, and he learned further that that stock was the one that was traded in most, and that the selling

came from west of Chicago. But who was buying? Was his father trying to support his specialty?

This was the question that for the moment made Tom more anxious than he had ever felt before in all his life. He could not imagine who was selling stock west of Chicago, in such a quantity as the paper showed. Tom knew the tricky manipulations that took place in most exchanges. Out of the two hundred and fifty thousand shares bought and sold on the day before, he was sure that only about one-fifth of that amount really changed hands. Still, fifty thousand shares sold, meant that there was a battle of some kind being fought, and Tom wondered where his father really stood. He could not telegraph him. The code what he had was the one used by the railroad, and he did not dare send a message across the wires, asking his father what he was doing. If Elizabeth Johnson had not told him, yesterday, that her father did not deal in stocks, he would have believed that the Governor, himself, was selling the stock, so as to buy it back again at lower figures. "Over-honest" as Miss Willetts had called the Governor, his conscience

would not prohibit him, Tom thought, from doing such a thing. He had known honest men to do that before.

As he could not telegraph, Tom did the next best thing. He dressed himself, hurriedly, and wrote a letter to his father. He did not tell him what he had heard of the governor of California from Elizabeth or Nina, but only asked him to confide in him what he was doing. It would take five days to receive a reply at the Grand Cañon. Tom did not possess much patience, but in this instance, he had to exercise what little he had. He mailed the letter at Trinidad, at which station the train stopped for nearly a half hour. Elizabeth and Nina had joined him in the drawing room, and they left the car with him.

"We are not in Kansas yet, are we?" Elizabeth asked.

"Of course not," replied Nina. "I don't know where we are, but I'm sure Kansas hasn't such mountains as these in it."

"No," said Tom, "We are now in Colorado. We have left the states which bear the Indian names. From now on, we will meet those of Spanish origin. This town has one of them, Trinidad means trinity."

"There's only one trinity that could fit this place," said Nina, quickly, "the three d's death, destruction and despair."

"Why so?" laughed Tom, "this is a growing town. The people who are here take pride in it, and if they heard what you say, they might take exception."

"I suppose, Mr. Larkin," said Elizabeth, "that you could find beauty in that roundhouse, in those smoke stacks, and in those poor looking houses."

"How you misconstrue my words," he protested. "The works of human hands are not always beautiful, but the works of nature are."

"Oh!" exclaimed Nina and Elizabeth together.

After that, Trinidad was treated with more respect.

When they had finished breakfast, Mrs. Larkin entrapped Nina again into playing piquet, and Elizabeth and Tom seemed to drift together, just as they had done the day before. The sun poured a wealth of heat upon the earth, and the observation platform never appeared more inviting. They took their old places, and Elizabeth was the first to speak.

"You don't seem at ease to-day, Mr. Larkin," she said, "What has happened?"

"To tell you the truth, I have been worrying over your father and mine."

"Why, what have they done?"

"You told me that your father owned a great deal of land bordering the railroad. My father owns many shares of stock in the railroad, and the value of the stock has depreciated thousands of dollars since we left Chicago. That means that both our fathers have lost money, and losing money causes me a little anxiety. There is a great battle going on in the stock exchange, Miss Johnson, and the outcome may be serious to those two men, the one representing the road itself, and the other the governor of a great state."

"But can anyone prevent this loss, Mr. Larkin?"

"That is a question which I cannot answer. If I could only do something to win my father's respect, I would make any sacrifice. I would do any deed, no matter what it might be."

He was so earnest that she said, "And I hope that you may do so."

"Oh, Miss Johnson, if I only knew you well

enough, and you knew me equally as well, you could help me."

"I help you to make your father think you superior to him?" she exclaimed, greatly surprised.

"Yes, I feel sure that you can."

"I don't understand you," she said, slightly provoked.

"You can help me by introducing me to your father."

"Oh, in that way," she replied, feeling relieved.

"Yes, if I could talk with him, say in ten days or two weeks, I think that I could help my father in some of his plans."

"I fear that my influence upon father would not carry much weight, Mr. Larkin. Some men, you know, respect very little the opinions of women. Then, too, father does not like me to receive callers, but I will think over what I can do. Perhaps Miss Willett's father could introduce you better than I could. That sounds strange, Mr. Larkin, but father—as good and wonderful a man as he is—has his peculiarities."

He saw that she was embarrassed, and

thinking of what Miss Willetts had told him the evening before, he pitied her.

"I think I understand," he said, quietly. "My own father has only one object in life, the railroad; your's, the ruling of the state. All family life, all those tender hours that go to make up home life are used in cold, hard work. There's too much work, Miss Johnson. There's too little repose. Few contemplate life, but just rush on, as the torrent once rushed through this pass long ago. See, the rocks here are not smooth! The water must have torn its way through, splitting and cracking, as if its life were too short to do its work. It is cruel to destroy life in building up corporations. What will be the end?"

"Why, you are taking a sad view of life this morning, Mr. Larkin."

"I do not mean to be sad. I suppose what is wrong about me, is that I try to struggle against the stream of American life when I should allow myself to be carried along with the current."

"I think that is where you are right, Mr. Larkin. To stand up among all these money mad men and cry, 'Halt!' shows more bravery than to fall into, as you say, the current."

"I'm glad to hear you say that. It shows me that you believe in individuality, in looking sometimes inside of ourselves, in not always turning your attention to the violent life around you. You believe as I do, in a way, I think. This center about which the world revolves, yes, the universe itself, is the I. Each individual is his own center. My universe is not yours, and yours is not mine. Do you get my meaning? And then the next center is that of this world and not of the future world to come. Oh! sometimes when I see people making of Sunday only a day of contemplation, when I see them rushing pell mell after gold during the week, when I see them rely upon the ministers for the spiritual food I feel as if the world were a great, big mistake, as if chaos were not far away. But everything in this world is like the sand in the hour glass, a new truth, a new nation is formed from the crumbling of the old ones."

"Yes," he continued, "here we are leaving the land of Colorado, and about to enter New Mexico, the State of Silence. The trip, to-day you will find interesting. It is a land of a dying nation, and yet a land of a new, living

one. It is a land of color, of wonders. In far away corners, cities are built in the sky, upon high table lands, upon rocks that sparkle like jewels. The rocks, here, lift their perpendicular sides from the plains like immense colossal pillars that seem to support the heavens themselves. There, in that state, you will see beauty deified, beauty covered by a glory that is simple and yet sublime. No spectacle of the heavens, no aurora is more beautiful than the immense valleys, the mysterious mountains, the sacred silence, the wonderful colors of New Mexico."

"You enjoy that state, then, more than you do Kansas, Mr. Larkin?"

"Yes, as I enjoy the iridescence of a pure diamond more than the deep color of an emerald."

"On this trip, you are making me appreciate my country as I never have before. I feel as you do about many things in Europe, but the ride from Chicago to California has always been to me a tiresome journey through unattractive prairies, deserts and forests."

Tom thought that he could see, in her appreciation, a feeling of pleasure in being on the private car. He was not sure that she

enjoyed hearing him talk, but he felt sure that she was enjoying the conversation that morning more than she did that of the day before.

"It seems," he said, "that our opinions are not very different, after all. And I wonder if our opinions would agree upon one very important thing."

"What can that be, Mr. Larkin?"

"Why, I feel that an apology is due you from me."

"In what way?" she asked, greatly surprised.

"My mother, Miss Johnson, cannot stand the winters East. Last year we were in Algiers, and the year before in Egypt. This year, however, the doctor ordered her to go to California. Since I graduated, I have never left her, and for that reason, I suppose, I have not taken up mercantile business. Being musical and artistically inclined, I enjoyed life in Europe and northern Africa, and I had looked upon my trip to California as a death to every hope. What romance could I find there? What historical associations that would make the blood tingle and the heart throb? Still, I could not allow mother

to go alone, and I resigned myself to what Fate had laid out before me."

"Now I understand your remark about your will and the will of Fate not agreeing."

"Yes. To fight the will of Fate crushes a heart, Miss Johnson. When as I was about to leave my father, I insisted upon knowing something of his personal affairs. Men who are over-strained in business are dying premature deaths every day now, and I thought that it was my right to know of his wealth. He confided in me, and he showed me a problem that must be worked out in a short time, a problem that looks to me like the thirteenth labor of Hercules. After he told me, I went to the ticket office and read over the names of the people who were going to California on the Limited, and I read your's and and Miss Willett's."

"Why, Mr. Larkin!" she exclaimed.

"Now don't grow angry until I finish," he pleaded, quickly. "I knew you only by hearing Catherine speak of you. Private car life is dull at its best, as you have already found out, and I wanted my mother to have company. And still more, Miss Johnson, I wanted to meet you myself. There was only

one way to accomplish this, I thought at the time, and I took an advantage which may or may not be right. It depends on how you look at it. If I had invited you, or if mother herself had invited you and even if Catherine would have helped, you would not have accepted, and I committed the deed of buying your stateroom, giving the manager the excuse that you and Miss Willetts were great friends, and that I wanted to surprise you by having you join us in our car."

"Then you were the one to place us in that embarrassing position, were you?"

She was not angry, but disconcerted.

"And the woman, who was she?" she asked.

"My mother's maid, Mary."

CHAPTER X

From Trinidad, the train drawn by two heavy engines, had labored up the high walls of the Raton mountain range. Tom had been too much interested in Elizabeth to speak of the views that grew and grew in extent, as height after height was climbed. They had made the large, sweeping curve that partly crowned the ascending slope, and the last glimpse of the grand view had disappeared behind intervening hills. Now, through a cut in the mountains about seven thousand feet high, the shadows became darker and darker until they entered a tunnel.

"Shall we go inside?" he asked. "It is not very long."

She had remembered it, and said "No."

When they emerged into the light they were in New Mexico, the State of Silence. And so it appeared to them. Neither for a time said a word. Finally Tom asked, "Are you angry?"

"No," she replied, "but I am slightly provoked."

"Of course you are. And you have a right to be. My act was not contemptible. It was more in the nature of a joke, but more serious than that, too, Miss Johnson. I did not want you to know that you were in the Larkin car until the next morning. Those rough westerners spoiled my plan. But if I have made a great error in entrapping you, if you wish to call it that, I can do no more than to apologize, and that I do profoundly."

"To apologize, to rue what we have done, is a show of weakness."

"But I am not sorry for what I have done. I have no regrets, whatever. What is more, I am glad you and Miss Willetts are with us. It seems that we do agree, after all, even in this."

"We do not agree," she protested, "You have been unfair—"

"Not ungentlemanly, I hope," he interrupted.

"I cannot call it that—perhaps unreasonable."

"But don't think, Miss Johnson, that I have not had my own little troubles in trying

to make everything seem natural. My bolting out of the car that evening, and back again, must have made you think I had lost my reason. I felt sure that you would have been angry if you had seen Mary that evening. Then, too, the poor girl has been kept a prisoner in her room, so as to make you feel comfortable. There is a serious side to it all, but it has its humorous side, also. Come, now, for the sake of Catherine, for my mother's sake, too, please try to forget what I have done. Here we are in New Mexico, a country in the sky, a country of happy dreams, for the towns seem to sleep peacefully on the breast of such a mother. Miss Johnson, I don't ask you, then, to forgive me. I only ask you to close your eyes to what I have done."

As the tunnel, the darkness, and the parapets of the Raton range gradually receded and melted away in the distance, so did the unpleasant episode disappear, and new thoughts came in and hid, as if forever, that passing moment. What he had done had not justified itself, but Elizabeth could not condemn him either. She seemed to enjoy his way of talking and she found satisfaction in having someone agree with her in her views of

life which Nina had called peculiar. Her friend had said that not to be sorry for what you had done, showed a great, big conceit. But Elizabeth argued that regrets were time wasted, because what was done could not be undone, and the thing to do, in that case, was to go on as if nothing had happened. Even at school she had championed this one particular idea. None of her girl friends would agree with her, and to find herself alone with that opinion had shaken her faith in its integrity. But to hear Mr. Larkin saying almost the same thing, gave her a help and a confidence not only for this one idea, but for many others besides.

Then, too, she liked to hear him speak of nature as he had done to her before. Down in her heart was a love for the beauty in everything, and all she lacked was the power to see it. Now, Tom had served to strengthen her eyes, so that she saw the country through which she was riding, differently. And there they sat until nearly lunch time, admiring the graceful firs, the thoughtful pines, the weird charm, the beautiful views that, here and there, framed in wild outline, seemed like a glimpse into another world.

Nina had won at piquet that morning, and her victory gave added force to her laughter. While they were at table, she was told how they had been lured into the private car, and she could see nothing but humor in it.

"I guess the Larkins are all alike," she laughed. "It sounds like one of Catherine's jokes. It must be in the blood to deceive in a way that doesn't make people angry. So the "L" on the towel was not for 'ladies,' or 'last', but just 'Larkin?' You must have had a hard time trying to conceal everything, Mr. Larkin. I, for one, am not sorry, and I propose to finish my letter to Catherine and tell her how nice you and your mother have been."

"And please don't forget to mention the symmetry of the rooms," Tom added.

"You don't mean to say that you heard me ask Elizabeth how to spell that word the other evening, did you? Why—why—"

"Mr. Larkin, you have played the eaves-dropper, too."

"Go on. I'm deceitful, I'm a trickster, I'm an eaves-dropper. But there it ends, for now you know nearly everything."

After the station, Las Vegas, named after the meadows, was passed the game of bridge

was begun. On that afternoon, Nina had her way and partners were chosen by cutting cards. Even then, when she drew Tom he failed miserably in coming up to her requirement of a bridge player. He was not able to play just the card she wanted, nor did he hold any hand that could be called passably good. But, somehow, when Elizabeth played with him, cards, the way they fell, luck, and everything seemed to unite with overwhelming effect.

"It's aggravating," Nina said to Elizabeth when they were in their room, "the way he plays with you and the way he plays with me. He's dumb at bridge."

"Why, Nina, he plays well."

"Of course you think so. Why, Elizabeth, I really think that he can't do wrong before your eyes. Two mornings out on the observation platform have made you a different girl. You are head over heels in love with Tom Larkin, and he's head over heels in love with you. I can read his eyes like a book. You, too, show the influence he has gained over you. Why, Elizabeth, it's a case of love at first sight."

Then there was a pause.

"I said that it's a case of love at first sight, Elizabeth," she repeated.

"We are in New Mexico, Nina, the State of Silence. I don't answer such foolish questions."

But that did not satisfy Nina Willetts. She threw her arms around her friend's neck and said, "Well, I don't blame you if you are in love with him. He's a fine fellow."

Out in the drawing room, Mrs. Larkin and Tom were awaiting the announcement of dinner.

"It's strange," Tom, she said, rather sadly, "that we don't get any telegrams from your father."

"He's too busy to think of us, mother. He's fighting a battle against great odds as far as I can see. Since we have been away, he has lost nearly a million dollars. Stocks are falling, and there hangs over the future of the railroad itself, a menace that he is trying to overcome. How I wish that I knew what he is doing."

"What do you know, Tom, that he has not told me?"

"Something that I dare not even breathe. All that I can tell you, is that the railroad is

in danger. On the day we left, father, for the first time, took me into his confidence."

"Well, I suppose women are not made to know railroad affairs. We are put here only to raise families."

"Yes, and to raise men higher. Why, father would not be what he is without your early help."

"And like a child he forgets me—I fear, married as he is to his company. I wish that we could make him feel that we were of some use to him."

"Perhaps we can, Mother. If we do anything, it must be done through Elizabeth Johnson."

"What can she do?"

"Alone, not much, but with us, probably a great deal."

"She is a dear girl, Tom. There's something substantial about her. She must have a true heart if her countenance speaks anything."

"She is such a girl as you must have been."

"Now, don't flatter your old mother, Tom. You seem to like her."

"Yes; perhaps better than any girl I know, but that's not much, mother."

"Well, tell me how she can help us to win father's recognition."

"I cannot tell you now. But wait until we arrive in California, until we pass Arizona, the state of the arid zone."

CHAPTER XI

The next morning they awoke in Arizona. Tom arose before the others, and the light in the east was just beginning to outline the purple mountain terraces that, here and there, rose from the earth like mighty pyramids. The evening before, he had invited Elizabeth and Nina to join him, but they had not yet made their appearance. He put on his overcoat and went out upon the observation platform. He sat down and watched the heavens, as mysterious shadows were slowly melted by the light. The pearly vapors that clung to the earth began to tremble as if caught in a loving embrace. The air was fresh and fragrant, and the breath of dawn awakened in Tom remembrances of his experiences at sunrise in the grand Sahara.

He felt happier than he did the morning before. A telegram from his father containing only the words, "Am well. Reports of your journey come regularly," although not

answering Tom's question, showed that he and his mother were in his father's thoughts. Then, too, he had unburdened to Elizabeth how he had imposed upon her, and he felt relieved in knowing that his disclosure had not angered her. There was one thing which made him thoughtful. In the afternoon they would be at the Grand Cañon. Would that day be the last that they would be together? Would Elizabeth and Nina wish to go to California without him and his mother?

Mrs. Larkin had not seen the Grand Cañon for many years, and it did not take much persuasion for Tom to win her consent to visit it again. Since the last visit, they had both been to Europe, and had seen the wonders of the Dolomites, of the Alps, and of the northern part of Africa. Now would be a chance for them to make a comparison, which they did not have before. Mrs. Larkin was not very fond of watching the sun rise, and she said that she would hear about it from younger people, and although not sleeping, she was resting peacefully when she heard the two girls pass through the drawing room.

"Are we late?" Elizabeth asked, as she and Nina joined Tom.

"You seem to come just when the edge of the sun appears," he replied.

"Well, what is there to see?" asked Nina, suppressing a yawn.

"It's all there," he said, making a half-circle in the air with his hand.

"Just rock, sand and stone," she replied, "just like other sunrises, with less shiver and fatigue than in the Alps, but the same hunger, same sleepy eyes and same old shadows, color effects and all that."

"Perhaps Fred can give you a cup of coffee and a biscuit. I'll go see," said Tom, opening the car drawing-room door.

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" Nina replied, "I was only fooling. Now, please don't take me seriously, Mr. Larkin," she pleaded. "I lack sympathy with nature, I suppose. Now, Elizabeth just dotes on such things. Give her a rock with sunlight on it, and she will burst into poetry any time."

"Surely, Miss Willetts," Tom said, "You must acknowledge that life is more than eating, playing cards and reading."

"Of course I do. I am not so hard to please, Mr. Larkin," she said, with a merry twinkle in her eye. "I like sunsets much

better. They're over sooner, and then you don't have so long to talk about them. This sunrise, I'll wager, will be the theme for an all day talk, and that is why I want to discourage it from the start."

There could be no going into rhapsodies after that rebuff, and although the sun revelled in painting those far-away mountains, those wide plains, and the sky with wondrous colors, it could only inspire in them a mild admiration.

"I hope that I haven't spoiled *your* enjoyment," Nina said, when Tom and Elizabeth quietly watched the transformation.

"No," replied Elizabeth, "you have simply closed the door to what I might have said."

The silence which followed that reply proved that they were all deeply thinking. Tom felt that he had made a mistake in asking Nina to look at the sunrise. She had not spoiled it for him, but he was sure that he would have enjoyed it more if he and Elizabeth were alone. Elizabeth, herself, felt that there was something wrong somewhere, either with Tom or with herself. She was not long in coming to the same conclusion as Tom. For the first time on the trip, she began to

feel that Nina certainly enjoyed herself more with Mrs. Larkin than she did with her and Tom. But it did not take long for Nina herself to feel that she was an intruder. She always had thought that people gave themselves away whether they said anything or no. She soon analyzed the sort of silence that reigned about her, and for the life of her she could not find an excuse to go into the drawing room. However, what none of them could do to make each other comfortable, the train did. It stopped at a station called Winslow.

It was nearly seven o'clock, and the Moki Indians were already there with their beaded chains and belts and decorated earthen ware. They had learned in which part of the train, on the overland, were the people who had the most money, and they stopped and showed their goods before the windows of the last two cars. They were all women and a few younger ones stood around the observation platform of the Larkin's car. Their appearance broke the silence of the disconcerted three, and each one had something to say; in fact, they all spoke at once. With one of the squaws, was a young Indian girl whose round, dark face with high cheek bones was very attrac-

tive, if not beautiful. To this one, Nina gave all her attention. She even persuaded her to mount the steps of the car, and enter the drawing room. All the trinkets she had for sale, were bought for more money than was asked. Such an impression did she make upon them all, that Nina persuaded Tom to send her into his mother's room with one of the chains of beads. The girl could talk Spanish, which Tom knew very well, and she did not seem to fear any of them, and she carried a chain to Mrs. Larkin. The Indian girl was not disappointed in meeting such a high lady, for she came back rather awkwardly holding tightly a silver dollar in her hand. After that, Nina felt more generous. Elizabeth, not wishing to be out-done by her friend, opened her heart more fully. Even Tom felt the influence of charity and with his portion added to the others, most of the beaded chains were purchased. There was no reason for such a show of generosity, and they all felt foolish when the train left the station and they found one of the chairs loaded with enough beaded chains to supply a school. The sunrise had failed to make Nina talkative, but the meeting with the

Indian had started her busy mind to work, and it did not stop even at breakfast.

"Now, did you ever see anything sweeter than that Indian girl's expression?" she went on, "Eyes as black as coals, and face open and full as a pancake. Her hair was coarse, I know, but it went well with her whole get up. Do you know, there's something interesting about those people. Poor souls! We look upon them as way below us, just because they don't squeeze their shapes out of proportion, because they don't wear Paris model dresses and hats. Why, Mrs. Larkin, do you know I think they are better off really than some of us? They live good, quiet lives, and have not the bridge craze or the passion for low necks. Do you know I think civilization is sometimes a failure? What have we better than they? Actors, trolleys, parlor cars, high buildings, style, but after all, coming down to the fine points, they have food, clothes and houses, and they don't have to worry about stocks, corporations and other things. Indians are people with souls as good as ours, and I'm for them every time. I pity them. I wish

they would get together and just show us that they have some power left."

"Good for you!" exclaimed Tom, when he found a pause through which he could be heard.

"Yes, I mean it," she continued. "We go to them and say their religion is all wrong. We insist upon giving them sewing-machines and wash-boards, and all our civilized things, and make them unhappy. Why, it's a sin to tear down their ideals and give them new ones. We make them feel that they are below us when really they have dignity. Then we educate them into our way—our way! Just as if there are not other ways, No! we say to them, 'you live wrong. You've got to wear clothes. You must have newspapers and telephones. Above all, your religion is wrong. Then we bring in whiskey, cards, and teach them gambling games.'"

"Nina," your oatmeal is growing cold, said Elizabeth, trying to calm her friend.

"I don't care if it is. It's a shame. We take them to the East. We show them the United States Senate, the House of Congress, our politicians, Philadelphia and New York,

and then show them the Stock Exchange on Wall Street. Nice models of civilization, all of them! No wonder the Indian looks and goes back to his home out here in the wilds. Why, he must shake his head and say *we* are not civilized. Just because they scalped and tortured and did lots of bad things, we drive them back, and back and back until they are broken-hearted. Are we so grand, with our lynching, our murders and our crimes? It makes me mad, downright mad, to see these people trodden upon by the white man. Oh, I wish I were a man. I'd make the people take notice. I'd champion the cause of those poor Indians who are not understood."

"Why, Miss Willetts, hurrah for you!" cried Tom, "You are just saying what I think, in a way."

"Then we do agree upon one thing?" replied Nina, beginning to eat her oat-meal, which by that time had become a lumpy cake.

"There's a great deal of truth in what you say, Miss Willetts," said Mrs. Larkin. "I'm sure of one thing, Tom, the squaws see their husband and the children their fathers more often than we poor, civilized beings do. There

are no presidents of railroads among the Mokis, and I guess they are happier for it."

When breakfast was over, both Mrs. Larkin and Nina decided to write letters. Mrs. Larkin wished to acknowledge the receipt of her husband's telegram, and Nina felt it her duty to finish the letter to Catherine Larkin and tell her how glad she was that she had an aunt and cousin so attractive. The observation platform was, therefore, left alone for the two who had occupied it on the other two mornings.

"Nina's original, isn't she, Mr. Larkin?" Elizabeth asked, when they were together watching the rails grow nearer together, and the land recede and lose itself in the perspective.

"She's a fine girl, Miss Johnson. I would say a very strong friend."

"That's just why I like her. She has some strong opinions, and she shows admirably why she has them."

"Yes, the one fault of our American people is that they think that they have the only way of life, the only way to most everything. Everywhere I go, I find people who know some one thing better than we do. Even in

the desert of Sahara, I saw Arabs whose faces were so pure and, yes, I can say it of them, so sweet, that if I were an artist I would paint them for a picture of Christ. Europe and America are ungodly. Their religion is on their lips. Their hearts are in business in money, in pleasure. The Orient is nearer God than the West. The great gulf between them and us is because they are to my mind nearer the truth. Yet we send men over to their country and try to make them live our way. These poor Indians have a Great Spirit, which they call God. They are ignorant of art, literature and business, but I often wonder if their souls are not nearer God than ours are."

"I, too, believe as you do in that, Mr. Larkin."

"They possess one thing which we, brilliant as we are, do not know. To us, the bite of the rattlesnake is deadly, to them, no. In their snake dances they are bitten by these reptiles and they do not feel the poison. The secret is well guarded between the high-priest, the neophyte, and the oldest woman. Three days before the dance they fast and take the antidote that makes the venom harmless."

"Yes, they are a strange people," he added, thoughtfully. "In their faces I seem to see the whole age of man. Their history is unwritten, and Americans lack the Homer to sing their Illiad. Nothing is sadder than the death of a nation. What shall we say of the one who kills it?"

"But," he said, in a brighter tone, "we, too, have our past. It dies. We are always in a state of transition. My own life has been arid, useless, and, yes, probably uncivilized. I do not believe as others do. I have found myself alone with my beliefs until I met you, Miss Johnson. I feel as if I have been living in a zone where nothing grew but the spiny cactus, the sage, the grease-wood and the aloe, dressed well in their flowers, but seemingly useless plants. It seems as if I were living a wasted life. But the meeting with you has reclaimed that life. We are now nearing Williams, where we branch off to the Grand Cañon. May I ask of you a favor?"

"Why, what sort of a favor do you mean, Mr. Larkin?"

"I would like to look at that wonder alone with you."

"Why, I cannot describe it to you!"

"You can do more than you think."

"But I have never seen it before."

"Miss Johnson, Elizabeth, let me call you that when we are alone, won't you?"

"Mr. Larkin—" she hesitated.

"Will you grant me that favor?"

She did not seem to know how to reply to that request. He saw her confusion, and rejoiced that she did not appear angry. Then, too, he preferred not to hear her say "yes." A permission given in silence, he thought, was much better than one given aloud. And he took her silence, such as it was, as an acquiescence. However, he feared that he had dared too much, and in the pause that followed he could not summon up courage enough to call her by her first name.

"Miss Johnson," he said, "we are nearing Flagstaff. Have you ever watched the San Francisco mountain? We make nearly a complete half-circle around it in going to the Grand Cañon."

She seemed relieved at escaping from answering his other questions, and replied, "I have noticed that mountain, and I have always thought it lonely out on the high plain all by itself."

"It would be lonely if it had but one peak. But there are four, two, however, more conspicuous than the others."

He went over to her side of the car and looked towards the north.

"They can be seen now."

In order to look at them she was obliged to stand near him, and the movement of the car brought them nearer to each other than they would have dared stand by themselves.

"Two of the peaks have American names. No Spaniard would call them Humphrey and Agassiz."

"They are beautiful," she said. "But what would you call them?"

Bound together so firmly as those two peaks were, Tom could have given a name to them, but he could not force himself to say it, and he replied, "Well, I don't know."

"Let's ask Nina, she's good on naming things," Elizabeth suggested.

They went inside and pointed out the peaks to her.

It took but a moment for Nina to ask, "What is 'The two lovers,' in Spanish, Mr. Larkin?"

"*Los dos Amantes.*"

"Well, I'd call them that," she replied, sealing her letter to Catherine Larkin.

Tom was not sure whether he was pleased or not with that name. Elizabeth gave no opinion, but Mrs. Larkin who had just written, "with much love from your affectionate wife," said, "That sounds fine."

CHAPTER XII

The two peaks of the San Francisco mountains that Nina had re-named "the two lovers" were continually in view from the observation platform as the car was drawn over the tableland from Williams station. So immense was that wide plain that it seemed like a crimson ocean with here and there floating on its surface purple islands, some high and some low, emerging from hidden mysterious depths. There was something invigorating in that Arizona air that sends the blood tingling through the veins; that made the nerves more sensitive; that seemed to awaken the spirit to another world, a world void of everything except sky, earth and soul. The party, greatly impressed by the view were seated together upon the platform. Even Fred seemed interested, and his black face was lit up by an unusual light as he peered through the windows at no particular object whatsoever. Mary, who no longer kept herself

hidden, was in the drawing-room wondering what there was in that wide expanse to make people come there.

"What is wrong about this, Miss Willetts?" Tom asked, fearing to say what he really thought before such a critic.

"There's nothing wrong about it," she replied. "It's a lonely spot with nothing to enliven it except a mountain sixty miles away that seems ashamed to show its face by the covering of snow on its head. It seems to me, Elizabeth, that the Grand Cañon is going to be a failure if we are to judge it by the road leading to it."

"You forget, Miss Willetts," said Tom, "that Arizona is a prodigious mountain in itself; a huge table-land six thousand feet high, and that that mountain over there and all the others you see, are but its peaks; peaks, though, that rival nearly any other of our mountains. You don't look up to see the Grand Cañon, but down."

"A sort of hole in the ground, then, Mr. Larkin?" she asked.

"Have you not read about it?"

"The advertisements only. I rarely read other people's opinions about things I see

until I first see them myself. Too many run to books to find out what they ought to think."

"Well, all that is written about the Grand Cañon cannot even tell you what the authors think. Here is something which even the eyes fail to see."

"Then let's go back," she said, laughing. "I don't want to lose faith in my eyes."

"You might think, Mrs. Larkin," Elizabeth said, "that Nina does not enjoy many things in this world. But she does. When we were in Europe together she saw more than I did. She has a way of belittling everything. Even Rome—"

"Mrs. Larkin," Nina interrupted, "there is really, after all, only one thing that appeals to me; life, something with blood, bone and muscle to it. That is why I liked that Indian girl this morning. It was really the only interesting live thing outside of this car that I have seen since we left Chicago. Now, Elizabeth loves pictures, statues, music, sunrises, rocks, views and all that. But, wonderful as they are, pictures don't breathe, statues don't move, and as for music, well, I want life in that, too. Ruins spell dust, and as for views, what are they after all but pictures,

moving pictures, some of them, just like this we're having now."

As she was started on her favorite theme, she amused them until the train began to approach the pines that fringed the edge of the Cañon. Since the morning Tom and Elizabeth had spoken only short sentences to each other. Before the rest they did not appear very talkative, and everything they said appeared forced and unnatural. When they did find something to say, their eagerness to give a nice reply caused them to stumble over their words. Many times Tom ended his remark by, "Don't you think so?" and her "yes," was all that he could get her to say. And Elizabeth found herself saying too often, "I think, Mr. Larkin, will agree with me when I say—" But they were all glad when the train stopped at the station. Three days of continual companionship had been a little strain upon them, a strain not only for the host, but for the guests as well. Now there would be more freedom, and perhaps for Tom and Elizabeth more opportunity to study one another.

They had decided to spend their time while there at the hotel, and the large El Tovar,

built as it is of native logs and boulders, had a most welcome look and with its two long wings like two outstretched arms to them. Whatever sort of a Spanish conqueror Don Pedro Tovar, who first discovered the Cañon, might have been, there could not have been as much uncertainty in his breast as that which seemed to be in Tom Larkin's. Tom had found that his plan of campaign had been more difficult to carry out than he had thought it would be. Uncertainty as to its outcome loomed up large and formidable. The one thing, however, for the moment, was to secure suitable rooms, and as they had been telegraphed for a day ahead, everything was ready for their inspection. Of course the Larkin's name had the power of a great magnet, and the hotel, people all strove to do something for the wife and son of the president of the Railroad.

There was one satisfaction to Tom on his arrival at the hotel, a telegram in answer to his anxious letter was awaiting him from his father. It said, "Letter received. Everything satisfactory." And although he did not know what had been done, he felt that his father was not troubled over the falling market.

Other satisfying news he found in the paper was that the price of the railroad stock had held its own the day before. But he had no time to read a newspaper. A bell-boy told him that Miss Willetts had left her room, and that she and her friend had gone to look at the Cañon. As he wanted to hear Elizabeth's first opinion of that grand sight, he hurried and met them just as they were nearing the edge. It was after five o'clock, and the sun at that time of the year was near the horizon, and the jutting precipices cast fearful shadows along the great walls.

"It's awful!" exclaimed Nina, shading her eyes with her hands.

Elizabeth waited for sometime, and then said, "Yes, Nina, it's awful, as God is awful!"

They turned to Tom, and he said, "I can say nothing more. It is terrible; it is lovable. It seems like a great judgment, and—yet, it seems friendly. It is comprehensible, it is incomprehensible. It is as you both say, 'awful,' yes, 'awful as God is awful!'"

"We must see it to-morrow morning—not at sunrise," he added. "It is never the same. The air is more or less transparent. The growth of flowers and plants continually

changes. The shadows are never alike. The angle of the sunlight with the change of the season is always different. Even here nature never repeats herself. Although immobile, the Cañon is as fresh as the sea. It is as mysterious as the ocean."

"But how could such a thing be formed?" Elizabeth asked. "How could a chasm thirteen miles wide, two hundred miles long, and a mile deep be made by the washing of a river? It is one of nature's miracles, Mr. Larkin!"

"Her best miracle," he added.

But there was nothing satisfying to them in either what they said or what they saw. The Grand Cañon was not disappointing to Nina. Its vertiginous depth produced in her a feeling as if she would like to cast herself into its luring terrors. She walked towards the hotel, leaving Elizabeth and Tom together. They could find nothing to say to one another, and they stood gazing into the immense pit until shadow after shadow blotted out wonder after wonder, until the great opening was opaque, as a cloudy amethyst is opaque carrying in its dull but precious shape the mystery of its creation.

"Elizabeth, it seems like a purple sea," he

said softly, "hiding in its depths I know not what joys, what tragedies. We will see it again tomorrow."

The pronouncing of her name came to him as naturally as if he had called her by that many, many times. There was no question in his mind whether or no he had the right to call her so. And Elizabeth, herself, at the time, did not think that he showed any forwardness in addressing her in that way. There was an oppressive silence, cold, cheerless silence to them, and they turned their backs upon the Cañon and walked beneath the pine trees that stood motionless in the quiet air. They gave only a passing glance to the Indian house that had been built there, and that was inhabited by a family of the Hopi tribe.

"Isn't it strange," Elizabeth said, "that the Grand Cañon has stopped both our mouths?"

"The Grand Cañon gives big and grand thoughts that cannot find the words to express them. When Miss Willetts was with us, I was afraid to speak for fear that she would apply a humorous meaning to what I said. But now that she is away, I can think of nothing to say about the Cañon itself. It

makes you feel so incapable, and impotent. And yet I thought that I could be stirred to say something that would express my true feeling."

"You told me that you had studied music. Perhaps through that you could say what you feel."

"But the Cañon is silent. I have tried, Elizabeth, to write of the desert, of the ocean, but I have always found my thoughts bound by a wall. Even music falls before some emotions. Oh! Why has God placed a limit upon human thought?"

For sometime after they remained quiet and thoughtful. Elizabeth finally broke the silence.

"Will you play for me this evening?" she asked.

"From what composer?"

"If you have studied music as well as you say, you could improvise."

"Upon what theme would you want me to play?"

"Whatever your emotions dictate."

The shadows of night were fast creeping under the trees, and they decided to return to the hotel. Nina had joined Mrs. Larkin,

and they were waiting patiently in Mrs. Larkin's parlor. Elizabeth and Tom could not have appeared very happy, for Nina said, "That Cañon's scarey. It seems to have frightened you both, or else made you sad. I wish now that I had waited until to-morrow morning to see it. It gave me the shivers. Your mother, Mr. Larkin, has the right idea. When I came back and asked her why she did not rush for a view, she replied calmly, 'the Cañon can wait.' That's just the way to treat that Cañon. It's been waiting thousands of years for people to look at it, I guess it can wait a good many more thousands for people to look at it without a tremor of an eyelash. It looks to me like a big, dead corpse. There's no life in it, not a vestige. Then, too, I hate giddy things, and if I stood there much longer this afternoon, I would have fallen head first right into it."

"Then, to-morrow," said Elizabeth, "you can go to the Indian house and study dry life there while we look at the Cañon."

Although this was directed to Nina, Tom took it as an answer to his question of that morning when he had asked her, near Williams station, if he could see the Grand Cañon

alone with her. But she spoke in such an easy manner that he could not believe that she herself knew what she had done. Such an answer gave him more pleasure than if she had said a direct "yes."

"You don't mean to tell me that there are real, live Indians—not dry, Elizabeth—near here, and I did not know it?"

"There are," replied Tom, "and now you can see, not only how they sell beaded belts, but how they make them, and do all other things necessary for a household."

The prospect of seeing Indians with her own eyes, scrubbing pans and baking bread, and washing clothes, transferred Nina into a rosy world that was all her own. She talked about the Hopi Indians all through the dinner, and she even persuaded Mrs. Larkin to leave the parlor, go below and look at the relics, books and pictures that were exhibited in the main hallway. There was a piano in the private room, and Tom played a few chords upon it to see if it were in tune. To his surprise and Elizabeth's too, there was a softness in its tone that was not usually found in hotel pianos. The dinner had been cleared away,

and while Tom sat in front of the piano, Elizabeth took a chair near him.

"But you yourself play nearly everything, Miss Willetts tells me," Tom said.

"Yes, I play what others write."

"That, however, is an art."

"An art, yes, but not a satisfying one to me. To be able to sit down at any time and pour out my thoughts in music—well! that's something that Fate has not granted me."

He had been playing as they talked, and gradually, from repeated trials, a grand air emerged that suggested a cathedral with high arches and long aisles. It was more like a holy hymn, and it brought to Elizabeth's soul a light which illuminated her virtues and made her conscious of things she never believed she possessed. Tom was carried away by the inspiration that moved him, and he played better than he knew. Never before had his fingers moved with such a force and as chord upon chord sang from the piano, he seemed to become so bewildered that his inspirations and his hands did not work together. Suddenly he ceased.

Turning toward her, he said, "I have played this evening, Elizabeth, as I have never before.

But I felt the lack of some one thing. Yes, I feel as if I were in a state of transition. My arid life has not yet received the rain that will make it fruitful."

"But you were playing a wonderful air!"

"Yes, but it lacked completion. That is where you can help me."

"Why, I could not teach you music."

He was on the point of saying, "without you that air would never have been played," when Nina and his mother entered the room. Both were carrying pictures and trinkets, pictures of Indians and trinkets made by them.

CHAPTER XIII

"It seems," said Tom, the next day as he and Elizabeth were looking over the edge of the Cañon, "that everything God had thought and had not made on the earth, he had dreamed here."

Mrs. Larkin and Nina had gone to the Hopis' adobe and had left Elizabeth and Tom alone to walk along the edge of the Cañon. The day was balmy and the Cañon shone with great brightness, as the sun had drawn aside the silver veil of mist. Elizabeth appeared as thoughtful as she had been the day before. She could not help thinking that she was nearing some crisis in her life, and she surprised herself in not combatting against the influence which seemed to draw her gently on. There was an uncertain pleasure in allowing herself to be led into paths that her heart had never before taken. She seemed to wish rather to listen to Tom than to speak. The Cañon of the Bright Angel creek directly in

front of them, extending for miles and miles until its source lost itself on the rim of the earth, claimed most of her attention.

"There is nothing that impresses me more than that wonderful way," she said, "for it is a way and leads to where the earth and sky seem to join."

"Earth and heaven mingle here as nowhere else in the world," he replied. "The Grand Cañon has the aspect of eternity. Nothing seems alive in me except my eyes. The silence that rules there is like the silence that follows or precedes the voice of a revelation. The main Cañon swallows up the smaller one as the ocean swallows the rivers. How it pleases! How it attracts! How it seduces!"

"And, Elizabeth, it creates an indescribable love in my breast. How I should like to know every mountain, every gorge, every cliff, every precipice, defile, ravine, peak, crag and mountain by name. Look! Every instant the aspect of that Cañon becomes more sweet, more bitter, like a love never satisfied, a love of knowing and adoring. It is like a sea where every bay, every island, every rock as you sail along, is more and more beautiful. But no liquid mirror of a lake breaks the

happy light of the sun into innumerable smiles there. Instead the boulders, the rocks, the stones, dissolve the golden light and make it opalescent, in which are the fires of the garnet, the milk of the pearl, the shadows of the emerald, sapphire and amethyst. What jewels are there, jewels so grand that the weight would crush the brows of kings! Yonder is an island of ruby in a sea of topaz!

"Yes, Elizabeth, it is a way where you see on every side the extremes great and small, of nearness and of distance, of narrowness and of breadth, and yes, of beauty and of destruction. Here are columns, pedestals, pilasters, lintels and beams all if put together, would form the grandest temple to God on earth. There are thrones here for titanic kings, amphitheatres, stages, pyramids, towers, minarets, domes, all in grand confusion. It is a way on which the heart and the soul, become dumb because they feel that they are in the presence of God!

"And see its shadows! an eternal play of light and shadow is found here. And what shadows! Such as are seen on mounds of dead cities, in caves that hide deep mysteries, in temples, in abysses that the seas make

smile for joy, in craters of volcanoes, in immense caverns, inexplorable, innumerable, immeasurable. Shadows that rest in the eyes of love, of rage, of fear. Shadows that rival those of the rose, the tulip and the lily. The violet cup, the centre of the passion flower, the depths of the purple larkspur, the fleshy lotus, the shadows in the recesses of all the flowers are not more beautiful than the shadows of this grand Cañon."

He paused a moment. He had never written as he talked at this time. He looked at her, and seeing her gazing straight before her, still into the Bright Angel Cañon, he said, "Do you not feel, as you look into that region as if you do not wish longer to be human dust, but a spirit, a part of God so that you could understand it all? Do your senses not awake as if waiting for an obscure joy? Do you not feel an indescribable beauty expanding through you? The velvety green you see there is of verdure, the silky lustre is the shining dust of disintegrated granite, the satin glimmer comes from the moist rock, all together it makes a picture of wondrous glory. Down in those clefts, those crevices, those fissures, rifts and gashes smile myriads of flowers,

Elizabeth, to which at night smile those other flowers, those silent, imperishable flowers of the heavens, the stars!"

"How beautiful!" she thought. And she wondered why she could find no words to express her thoughts. Everything he said seemed to strike an accord with all that she felt. She had enjoyed hearing him talk of Kansas, of New Mexico, and of Arizona, but now this seemed to be a culmination of his emotions. Her eyes and ears both enjoyed the sensation as she had enjoyed the springtime. Before her was the beauty of spring and its melody she seemed to hear in Tom's words. Poetic thoughts, she had always thought emanated from a man whose nature was somewhat weak and tender, but there was a ring of virility about what he said that made her proud of him.

"You tell me that you are striving to write a book that will move the people of this country. I cannot understand why that book has not already been written. You don't lack imagination. You are easily moved by anything that nature has to show you. You seem to know human nature very well. You speak a few languages. You have

travelled. You see a beauty in every thing. Tell me why that book has not been written."

He noticed that ever since his talk with her on the car yesterday she had not called him by name. To ask her to call him "Tom," appeared to him an act, not exactly of rudeness, but a little of forwardness. He was now calling her Elizabeth without any hesitancy whatever. He could see only one way to find out if she objected to address him by the first name, and he resolved to give it a trial.

"Before I tell you," he said, "I'm going to ask you one thing. I have a name which to pronounce for the first time sounds like an act of familiarity. There are many names that cannot be abbreviated very well. Mine can. No one ever called me Thomas, and it sounds very formal to hear it. Tom, can be spoken all kinds of ways, but it seems to me that if spoken by you it would neither be formal or familiar. I wish you would try it sometime. For twenty-four hours you haven't even called me 'Mr. Larkin.'"

"You seem to measure all that I do very carefully," she said, pleasantly.

"Yes, I do. With a measure by which every-

thing you do comes out just right. But I will tell you why that book has not been written. I lack the influence of inspiration. Since I left Chicago I have had it. Last evening at the piano I felt it stronger than ever. Today it moves me as I talk of the Grand Cañon. Elizabeth, you have done more to open the gates of my genius, that is, if I have any, than any other person in the world. I have lived in a state of transition—like the Grand Cañon. It is not dead. It is not alive. It is very much like a soul entering or leaving a body. It is *that* moment. It is a transition.

“For the Grand Cañon, Elizabeth, has a voice. It has a spirit, but you must go down into it, you must touch its flesh to hear what it says, to feel the influence of its power. Won’t you go down into it to-morrow with me?”

The invitation was one she would not accept, and Tom knew it just as soon as he had said it.

“We had thought of leaving on the early train, unless we take the drive to the Grand View Hotel with your mother.”

That reply went through him like a knife. Of course he knew that she and Nina were free to do as they liked, but to make plans for

going to California from the Grand Cañon without consulting him gave him a shock for the moment. He had thought that they had understood that they were to go to California in the private car. Now here they were making plans without consulting him.

"Why, you surely had not thought of going to California on the overland train in an ordinary parlor car," he asked.

"We had intended to do so."

"My mother and I fully expected you to go with us. If you wish to leave to-morrow morning, I think that we can make our arrangements to suit yours."

"You must not think of that," she said, "Nina and I already feel under great obligation to you. Please do not increase it. Another thing, my father is very careful that I should not accept any invitation from any one that I could not repay. I fear now that he would be displeased in my coming this far in your private car. I wish you understood my father, then you could easily see the difficulty I am under. Your mother and you have been very good to Nina and me, and I have enjoyed this trip more than ever before."

"Are you really serious about leaving to-

morrow morning?" he asked, in a tone that did not hide his disappointment.

"We had considered doing so."

Tom became quiet. The Grand Cañon, with all its wonders, had lost its attraction. He felt as if something his heart had rested upon had given away and left it without support of any kind. Elizabeth still gazed upon the Bright Angel Cañon.

"It seems that the silence of the Grand Cañon has affected you," she said, quietly.

"No, I am silent because of my inability to read character, because of my failure in building wrongly my hopes. To tell you the truth, Elizabeth, I had built a few plans with you in them, but this sudden announcement of your going to leave mother and me has sent them tumbling. Won't you reconsider your leaving us so soon?"

"I will do what is my duty," she replied. "I have a father whom I must please. I think he would prefer me to go the rest of the way alone."

"Elizabeth—"

But he did not continue, for they were joined by his mother and Nina who had been looking for them.

"You two will be throwing yourselves into that Cañon yet," said Nina. "What can you find in that big, wide, depressed scenery to dream over so long?"

"There is more in it than you think, Nina," replied Elizabeth, calmly.

"It's a wonder to me, Tom, that you can keep out of it as long as you have," said Mrs. Larkin. "He's the greatest one for climbing mountains, but you don't climb here, you go down, don't you?"

"I shall go down to-morrow morning," he replied. "I shall start at seven, and I shall go alone."

"Why do you prefer to go alone?" Nina asked.

"Because he sees deeper into things in solitude," replied Mrs. Larkin. "I wish I could be as enthusiastic over rocks, sand and ocean as he is. I suppose years make a change in one's likes and dislikes. If he goes to-morrow, then he will leave me alone."

Then it was settled, Tom thought. Nina had told his mother, and she and Elizabeth would surely leave them the next day. It was his same old, bad luck that was playing against him, and instead of becoming quiet, he changed completely.

"If Miss Willetts and—" he hesitated a moment, then said, "Miss Johnson, go away to-morrow we must take them on a drive this afternoon. They ought to see the Cañon from another point of view, and we will go to Boucher's Trail."

This sudden change of manner greatly surprised Elizabeth. She could hardly believe that this was the same Tom Larkin who had spoken so dreamily of the Grand Cañon, and who had become quiet when he had heard of her plans. There was a sound of good humor in his voice, and she thought that he was covering his true feelings very well if they were different from what his tone indicated. They took the drive in the afternoon and Tom still kept up his cheerful spirits. Even during dinner they did not seem to flag. Only when Mrs. Larkin and Nina agreed to play their last game of piquet together, did he become more quiet and thoughtful. There could be no music with Mrs. Larkin and Nina in the room, and Tom suggested to Elizabeth that they go down stairs and examine more closely the things for sale in the hotel lobby. Elizabeth could find no reason for not doing so, and they left Nina grumbling over the way

the cards were coming to her. There was nothing, however, that pleased them in the salesroom, and they soon drifted into one of the small drawing rooms along the hallway that led into the large, cheerless parlor. No one was there.

"I suppose you saw me acting a lie this afternoon by being perhaps too cheerful." Tom said, "For really, Elizabeth, I am sorry that this is to be our last evening together in the El Tovar."

"Then you were acting?" she asked.

"Could you not see it? I think your friend did."

"It requires a very thick veil for her not to see through."

"But could you not see yourself that I was forcing a liveliness that was not my own?"

"All I noticed was that there was something discordant with the way you had acted all along."

"Then you have thought of what we said together on the train? Those mornings were not lost upon the observation platform. Did you not see that I took an interest in what you said and did the first day we were together? Did you not see that that interest has grown?"

Do you remember the time when I told you that you could help me win my father's consideration? Have I not shown you that your very presence has awakened in me a different Tom Larkin? I talk differently, I find some intangible power possessing me that makes me feel life deeper. Last evening I played music inspired by you. To-day I talked about the Grand Cañon under your inspiration."

"What makes you talk this way to me?"

"What makes the flower respond to the sun's warm rays, Elizabeth? What makes the voice of a child burst forth into song? What is it that moves the emotions so that we offer praise? It is you who make me talk the way I have done, and the way I am doing now. You have known me only a few days, but it seems to me that I have known you longer. In all my trips abroad, in all my study of books, I have been seeking that one power that would open the gates to my success. And—do not draw away, Elizabeth,—you are that power to me. I may be vain to think that I have moved you in the least. But your looks, your face, your movements, quiet tongues as they are, have told me that

you, too, are touched by the influence of our being together. It may seem strange to you, but admiring, as I have, many girls, I have never found that one who had so completely moved me as you do. I feel that you are necessary to me, Elizabeth. I felt it the first day I saw you. I feel it now more than ever."

He saw her make a move as if to check him.

"Oh, I must tell you what is in my heart, Elizabeth! Please hear me. Am I asking the impossible? Have you no need for one who loves you better than a father, a mother or a brother? Have you no need for a strong heart to beat in unison with yours? You don't know what I am, but I lay completely before you a heart that has never loved before. I may be hasty in telling you this now. But as you leave to-morrow, I felt that I must speak. Tell me, Elizabeth, have I spoken in vain?"

"Mr. Larkin—Tom," she replied, "you frighten me with this disclosure. I don't know what to say to you. I do appreciate you. But, my father—oh, why did you tell me this to-night?" she cried nervously rising. "How can I give you any reply? Perhaps I am to blame for not being more reserved.

Oh, please let me go to my room. I cannot control my thoughts as they fly through my mind. I thank you for what you've said about me, but I don't deserve it all. Good night," she said, extending her hand. "No—no—" she pleaded as he tried to draw her back. "Good night."

"Yes, and good-bye," he said despairingly as she left the room.

"It's that same damned luck that follows me everywhere," he said to himself as he threw himself down into a chair. "It's the same old Fate that is working against me."

And there he sat he did not know how long, until a bell boy excused himself as he handed him a Los Angeles paper.

"It came late to-day, sir," he said as Tom took it.

He quickly turned to the stock market quotations and he was surprised when he saw the headline, "Stocks weak and feverish," but he was more surprised when looking at the quotation of his father's railroad that the stock had fallen four points.

CHAPTER XIV

Nina did not go to her room in a very good humor, because Mrs. Larkin had won the rubber game. When, however, she had entered and heard the sobs of her dear friend Elizabeth, her heart opened immediately its doors of sympathy.

"Why, what in the world has happened!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, I'm so unhappy," Elizabeth cried.

"So that Tom Larkin has gone and told you he loved you, and you didn't know whether you love him or not? Well, I'm not surprised that he loves you, but I am surprised that he told you so soon. But there's no telling when love will loosen a tongue. What answer did you give him?"

"I didn't give him any answer."

"That means 'yes' then."

"Why, Nina, it doesn't."

"Well, if I were a young man and a girl

didn't say 'no', I would take it that everything was satisfactory. But I told you that I suspected you both. Sitting on observation platforms always turns out that way. I knew he liked you the minute he laid eyes on you, Elizabeth, and you've got a nice fellow."

"But, Nina, I haven't accepted him."

"No, but you will."

"How can I? Father would never consent."

"Well, if I liked a man very much I don't think I would care whether father gave his consent or not. Tom Larkin's a fine fellow. He has faults, too. He's too fond of talking poetry, too fond of music and too fond of art. He ought to work."

"Nina, he does work. Thought is work, and he thinks hard. But I must respect my father. You know when he has made up his mind nothing can change it. He is a governor and his daughter must obey him."

"Oh, yes, I know all that, Elizabeth, but fathers very often say a lot of things, but when it comes to the time, they consent. Did he say good-bye to you?"

"Yes, and it was a pathetic one, too."

"He hasn't said good-bye to me. But,

Elizabeth, what are you going to do about him? It's a sin to let him sleep and feel that you don't love him when you do. Did you part in anger?"

"No, in sadness. I didn't know what to say. His handsome eyes spoke more than his words. And now I won't see him again. He goes down the trail to-morrow morning at seven. We do not leave until eight. Then, too, he will not want to see me after I acted the way I did."

"Now, Elizabeth, I don't want to advise you one way or the other, but if I were you, I would wait over a day and go to California in the private car. I would drive with Mrs. Larkin to the Grand View Hotel and would see that boy when he comes back from his trip."

"That would be an acknowledgment that I loved him."

"Well, don't you, Elizabeth?" Nina asked, drawing her friend's head close to her own.

"That's something, Nina, I don't know."

"Well, dear, I can't help you."

"But I can't stay here to-morrow. That would be a sign of weakness."

"Then telephone to the office that you will

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leave on the eight-ten train. Or better still, call them up and say that you wish to be awakened at six. Then you can decide."

And that was what Elizabeth did.

CHAPTER XV

It was dark when Tom Larkin was called the next morning. He had said good-night to his mother before he had retired, and he dressed very quietly, fearing to disturb her. When he went through the hall he saw a light in Elizabeth's room. As he had not said good-bye to Miss Willetts, he felt that he ought to knock on the door, but that idea soon vanished as he thought that Elizabeth might come to the door to answer. He decided to write a letter of farewell. But that was easier for him to say than to do, especially the part where he referred to Elizabeth. A thought that would fit just what he really felt would not come. His hand had written "Please tell her," and he could go no further for some time. The waiter announced his breakfast, and he left the sentence unfinished until after he had eaten. Even through his short meal he could not think of anything appropriate. He looked out of the window toward the Grand Cañon,

and he saw that it was filled with clouds. Day was beginning to dawn and everything was cold and grey. That view seemed to give him the words he sought. He sat down and reading over the "Please tell her," added, "that the Grand Cañon is hiding its face in clouds. The night seems to have been a sad one for the dawn shows me that the air had shed tears upon the trees and plants. As I go down into the depths I hope her journey westward across the arid zone will be a pleasant one." He sealed the letter and left it in the office for Miss Willetts.

His horse and guide were waiting for him outside, and he was soon on his way toward the entrance of the Bright Angel trail. For some time they rode along in silence, but when they reached the starting point where the road began to descend, the guide said regretfully, "There's no view to-day from this point."

"It doesn't matter," replied Tom.

"It's going to be a quiet day to me," the guide thought, leading the way.

Down the zig-zag path they went for nearly an hour, and Tom had found words only to ask the guide's name and to assure himself

that the saddle on his horse was tightly fastened. The layer of strata which looked like ribbons to Tom the day before, now measured step by step showed their immense depth. The first layer with its thousand feet of limestone, white here and there with great beds of alabaster, and light and dark red with large beds of cornelians—gems from which seals are made, and all the colors of the agate, in which mysterious views of other lands had been crystalized, all these wonders impressed themselves upon him only with their enormity. Nothing seemed to lighten the weight that oppressed his heart. At one time the guide ventured to say, "From this point is usually seen the mountain that is called the great battleship, but to-day the mist hides everything."

"I would rather have all the views blotted out this morning. I want to see only the things near me. I want to analyze these great sides, if I can."

But he was trying more to analyze himself, "Why is it," he thought, "that through all the strata of my years, my life has cut a way that is distorted and yet symmetrical? And now more years are to be added with I know not

what form, what shapes, or what substance? I cannot even conjecture. All my plans are pushed aside by a hard hand. My hopes are laughed at. I can help no one. My father must work alone. Elizabeth leaves my path of life. But it's best to be alone after all, I suppose, and a voice seems to say, 'Be alone; be alone in your walk of life, your heart is the best companion. Be prompt for yourself. Be faithful only to yourself.'"

Down they went. This time through a stratum whose wall was grey rock and bright red sandstone. It took them some time to zig-zag their way down this wall of eight hundred feet. But they passed crags, pitfalls, reefs, precipices and cliffs without one word of comment. Usually all the other tourists that the guide had brought that far had used up every adjective that they knew. So far Mr. Larkin had not used one, and the guide began to wonder what sort of a fellow the son of the railroad president could be. Even when they began to descend the next stratum, enormous as it was with its eighteen hundred feet of limestone resembling beautiful marble, Tom went along with no word of comment. Here and there immense red stains of a brilliant hue

blotted out the pure white body below, and the whole immense front appeared to Tom like some colossal tragedy pictured in stone.

At the bottom of this huge layer there was a large platform. Here the guide said, "Mr. Larkin, we can rest if you wish."

"But I should rather go on," said Tom.

The horses were usually given a rest at that place, but Tom's reply was more like an order, and the guide feared to cross him in any way. The path now led through high underbrush, and the green spot that Tom had seen yesterday turned out to be a wonderful garden between silent marble walls. He looked back and before and the place seemed to him to be a grand and awful vestibule into some eternal abode. At first the road gradually descended until it came to a place that seemed impossible of descent. This was called the corkscrew path, and there was just room for the horses to find a toe hold. Here, Tom thought, was the wildest place he had seen. Huge cavities appeared to him like the hollows of the grasping hands of dying giants. Here and there he thought he could detect the forms of mouths convulsed with pain. In his highly strung nature, and feeling as he did his imagination

made of that place a place of violence. Here in stone to him were images of crimes, monstrous deformities, struggles of anguish, misfortunes without a name, desolation without voice, torments not known, blind hopes, enormities of grief, all the frightful forms that the soul sees in its delirium. What he could not believe yesterday he did to-day. The writers were right. The Grand Cañon was a stab in the earth's breast, a ghastly gash, a terrible tragedy. He ceased to look. He fastened his eye upon the saddle of his horse. From a hidden stagnant pond he thought that he smelled the odor of an abyss invisible and all present, like the pestiferous breath of a dead sea. "Yes," he said to himself, "the Grand Cañon is wonderful, awful, like a horrible glory!"

The mist which hung like a pall in the depths of the Cañon now began to move like some great, live body. Down they went through hundreds of feet of sandstone and limestone in which all the colors of the rainbow seemed to be frozen. Down they went until the very back bone of the earth was reached, until the very spinal cord itself was seen in what trembled along its course with nervous and violent

movement, the Colorado River. The bottom had been reached.

And so Tom's shattered hopes reached their lowest depths. He turned to the guide and said, "Joe, we will eat our lunch together. I am glad to see the bottom of this Cañon. I have seen it at the worst that could be. All the way I felt depressed. Tie the horses and come join me. We must go back just as soon as they are rested."

"I've been depressed, too, Mr. Larkin," replied Joe, as Tom walked nearer the running river.

"Why, what made you depressed, Joe?" Tom asked when they had sat down upon a large, black stone with the waxy surface like a piece of chalcedony.

Joe was a man of about Tom's age. He had a smooth, clean cut face, rather muddy in complexion. He seemed to be as strong as an ox, and the muscles on his arms stood out like iron fibres.

"I got to thinking about things East," he replied to Tom's question.

"Everybody, nearly, out here has recollections of things East. But were yours sad ones?"

"They oughtn't to be sad ones, but sometimes I can't help thinking that I wasn't treated just square. Mr. Larkin, I'm from New York state, and I've got a mother and a father that would give anything to have me live with them, but I won't do it just because of a girl."

"So a girl drove you out here?"

"Yes. She's the wife of a mayor now, and I lost out. Mr. Larkin, other men may find ideals and all that in women, but I lost my respect for them all excepting my mother. So I came out here. I live alone, and I guess I'm happier as it is, though from what I see around me I guess there's very little happiness any way. Everybody's got something he's up against. Even animals have got to toe the mark. They're not free and I ain't either. Very few can live the happy life you lead. Some people just strike it right."

"You think, then, that I'm more fortunate than you?" Tom asked with some surprise.

"Why, Mr. Larkin, that's a funny question to ask me."

"Joe," Tom said impressively, "we all are a bundle of experiences, and if you examine

what makes up that bundle, you'll find everybody has a lot of them that they would like to throw away. In one way I may be more fortunate than you, but I don't think that I am as contented. Let me tell you one thing, we are all wanting to have the happiness of others. This morning, coming down here, I could have sworn that you were the most contented man alive, but you have that other side, too, as a counterbalance. I could not see much joy in anything. But this lunch and the raising of the mists have made me see with different eyes."

Tom stood up and looked first up and then down the wide, swift stream. Only a small portion of the Cañon could be seen—a few hundred feet of its length of over two hundred miles—but that portion showed its truth very much as other truth reveals itself to the mind in that vague but satisfying way of being more distinct as seen in a dreamy state than when awake. Tom walked as far as he could with safety. The Colorado River, choked by granite, sandstone and marble, had forced the stream of its life through every obstacle, and in doing so had carved one of the grandest intaglios that can be seen upon the world's

surface. It never gave up for a moment its struggle. It was fighting now.

"Heavens!" thought Tom, "What a lesson for those who can see! The trouble with me is that I have become stagnant. What I want is the rain of something new to fill up my drying out channels. And I'll get it. I'll get it! What if I have lost up to to-day in everything. It's a pretty arid desert that never has one drop of water to quench its thirst. There are the to-morrows, many of them too. Perhaps in them is that which will give me new force. Who knows?"

"Joe!" he called before he reached him. "Let's go back." Then when he was near him he added, "I'm satisfied with what I have seen here. You can see more from above. Only the big things of the Cañon are seen from the top. I want to lose the details. I want to see it again in its greatness and beauty. Joe, you lose a great deal in studying a life from its detail. You must study it as a whole."

"All right, sir," said Joe, who could not gather much meaning from what Tom said.

The whole aspect of the Cañon changed on the way back, bathed as it was now with rich golden sunlight. The shadows that had made

horrible images on his way down had now melted into beautiful forms. The wrinkles, frowns and creases had disappeared, and in their stead were smiles of light. The black holes of caverns had become the darkness that dwells in the pupils of kind eyes. Hollows that seemed to be filled with terrors were but arms filled with flowers. Poison cups had become chalices, the sandstone and marble sides had become huge walls of lace and the mountains, altars. Roofed as it was by the blue sky which seemed to be supported by wonderful columns, the Cañon had become a grand cathedral. The silence now impressed Tom as if all the people of the world were assembled there and were waiting to hear the word that God is yet to say.

"Joe, this is superb!" he exclaimed.

"I thought you'd like it going back. I always do."

"Like it," thought Tom. "He speaks of it irreverently." The voice of the guide jarred upon him. There was something to revere in that Cañon, something to love, to worship. It dazzled him, overawed him. It had become sanctified, glorified, and yet with all its tremendous greatness, he saw flying about him

a butterfly, a tiny bit of life that did not seem to fear to make its home there. Then he thought of many of those that were not seen in that world. Now and then birds flew from crest to crest, and in their airy flight his thoughts followed them. Bees laden with booty he also noticed flying along their invisible ways to their storehouses outside of the reach of men. Then he saw another butterfly join the one he had seen at first. Both together they playfully flew here and there, making love to each other as they went along. Now whenever he chanced to look he saw some hands that seemed to beckon, arms outstretched that invited him.

"Joe, this has been a great trip," he said when they reached the top of the trail. "I'm glad I took it. The Grand Cañon means more to me than it ever did before. Like the thousands of others who have gone down there and come back, I can say nothing about it. It is something that must be explored to be understood, and even then nothing is understood."

"All right, sir," Joe replied as if he had received an order that he would obey immediately.

The trip was over, and Tom as he climbed

the hotel steps said to himself, "Well, I have to start all over again and father will not have to work alone."

At the office he asked where his mother was and received the reply that she had driven to the Grand View Hotel.

"But did she go alone?" Tom asked, greatly surprised.

"No. Miss Johnson and Miss Willetts decided to remain over another day and they went with her."

CHAPTER XVI

"Miss Johnson decided to remain over another day!" exclaimed Tom. "Order me a horse immediately, I'll go meet them."

He could not believe his ears. He went out upon the porch to analyze more fully what that decision meant. It could mean but one thing he thought, a great, big "yes." It was impossible for him to keep still a minute. His joy ran away with every other feeling. Tired knees, stiff back, sore joints, what were they now? He had not the patience to wait until the horse was brought to him, and he hurried to the stables.

"It seems to me that it takes a long time to put a saddle upon a horse," he said to a man who was whistling some old time air and who did not move with much alacrity.

"The order just came, sir," was the answer he received.

Tom gave him an abrupt "Hurry up," and walked outside the stable and came back again

quickly. It seemed to him that nothing had been done in that time. Joe had heard him and he came forward to help the other stable man.

"Ain't you tired, Mr. Larkin," he asked, "after that trip to-day?"

"Not a bit of it," Tom replied. "I'm as fresh as I was before I started. That'll do!" he added as the stable man picked up a brush and began to smooth the horse's coat.

Tom jumped into the saddle and giving a quick "good-bye," dashed out and up the road as fast as the horse could go.

"He acts like a man running away from something," said the stable man watching Tom disappear through the pine trees.

"Either that, or he's lost his mind," replied Joe, his opinion of Mr. Larkin receiving a slight rebuff.

If Tom had lost his mind he thought that he had gained the whole world, and he galloped along with all possible haste to claim it. From time to time he gave a whoop which echoed through the forest bringing no response whatever. But that did not discourage him in the least. He had good strong lungs, and a throat that had been trained by college yells,

but it is a wonder that a few calls such as he gave did not cause an abrasion of the vocal chords. Even if they had he would have continued to call. There was only one thought in his mind—"Elizabeth had decided to remain over another day." His spirit, his heart, his soul, all his forces seemed to unite in one grand "Hurrah!" which he felt echoing in every vein, muscle and nerve.

In one of his vocal pauses he thought that he detected a response. He stopped the horse to listen, and yes, there could be no doubt about it, somebody called back. In a moment he was off again, and he now saw a carriage which proved to contain his mother, Nina and her. There was too much happiness in Tom's heart when he looked into that carriage and saw those eyes which bashfully revealed her thoughts and he said, "Well, I got back!"

That did not sound right to him and he added, "I'm glad you stayed over."

"Did you have a good trip, Tom?" Elizabeth asked.

Here was a new joy to him. She had called him by that name before Nina and his mother.

He was riding beside the carriage, and he

replied, "It was more of a revelation than a trip."

Nina looked at him when he made that remark, and she said to herself, "Revelation, nonsense."

Tom knew that conversation carried on between someone on horseback and others in a carriage was always made with difficulties, and he found many in trying to talk to the party that afternoon. But between the noise of the carriage, the missed words and the distance Tom was away—for he was obliged many times to take a wide sweep to avoid being rubbed by the trees—they arrived at the hotel with a rather good idea of what each had done that day. When they descended, Elizabeth and Tom both felt slightly embarrassed. It was a little difficult to break right in and say what they thought, and then they did not like to say anything near Nina and Mrs. Larkin. Nina, however, seemed to read through them both, and she made herself beloved by going upstairs with Mrs. Larkin while Tom managed to lead Elizabeth there by way of a detour around the porch.

"In the last two days, Tom," she said, "you have made me lose the power of feeling

that whatever I did was right. After the parting last evening I felt that I could not go away without telling you really how I felt towards you."

"Then I did not speak in vain last evening?"

"No. I think that," she hesitated with a charming grace, "I—do—need—you."

"Oh, Elizabeth," he cried, "to hear you say that floods my heart to overflowing with joy."

"But there is one thing, Tom, that I must ask before I freely give my consent. You must win the consent of my father."

"That will be easy," he said, "the hardest task is done."

"No, perhaps not," she replied, "You said that you wanted me to introduce you to him. That I will do, but he is a hard man to know."

"Then we are to keep a secret of our love until we win your father over?"

"That will not be hard to do, will it?" she asked sweetly.

"Yes and no," he replied. "It will be hard to hide what we feel, but in the trying there will be joy in pleasing you."

Piquet was never used to better advantage than it was by Nina that evening after dinner. Mrs. Larkin was always ready to play that

game, and with such a willingness Nina's invitation was as good as accepted before asking. Tom and Elizabeth did not wish to stay in the hotel. Logs, stones and roof seemed too small to contain their feeling. It was not very cold outside, and as the night was clear and the moon had nearly reached its full they went to a bench near the edge of the Cañon.

"What impressed you Tom, the most in your trip down the Cañon?" she asked at one time.

He thought a moment and replied, "Its hungry silence."

"Why hungry?"

"Elizabeth, I have read of the music of this Cañon. There is music there, but it is like the music of the stars, unheard, unknown. Every sound, the song of the birds, the hum of the bees, the rush of the waters, is swallowed up in that devouring silence. It is the strangest silence I have ever known.

"Last winter while I was in Algiers, I left my mother and took a trip to the desert of Sahara. In one of those emerald oases that lie in that burning sand, I experienced a silence that I had never before felt. A small stream

gave the place its life, and I loved to walk along its banks. One day I went further than before, and I noticed that the body of water gradually grew less. Still further beyond, the stream appeared only a moisture upon the sand, and finally even that disappeared and the bed was perfectly dry. Whither did that water go? There seemed to be a mystery about that little stream equally as unfathomable as that about existence. It came, showed its sparkle for a short time, and then disappeared. But in its short existence it gave life to many palms, many flocks of sheep and many people. It was the very heart's blood for that tired oasis, and without that stream of life it would gasp and die. So steady had been its flow that the Arab there gives no more thought to it than he does to the force of gravity which holds him to the face of the earth. It had an infatuation for me, and I began to understand why Mohammed had used so frequently the figure of running water in the parables of the Koran. A little beyond the dry bed of that stream was the desert with its mysterious silence.

"I have stood, alone, between the sublime columns of the Parthenon, and have looked

over the city of Athens below, and to the far away classic Ionian Sea, that sea of blue like precious lapis-lazuli. I felt that there was something in that view, in that temple, in that city, which would last for all time, even until the death of the world. In that eloquent silence which seemed to rest everywhere around that glorious country like the silence of the forests, of the rivers, of the mountains, I felt that there was a virtue like that which animated the elements of the Universe, a virtue, straight, serene, and as unchangeable as a law of Nature. The dust of the great poets and philosophers is scattered, but I felt that their essence, their force still lived and would live and appeal to the intellect of man.

"I have rowed out to sea, Elizabeth, alone, on a sea as calm, and as motionless as a sleeping and dreaming lake. I have seen no land, no ship, no bird, nothing but the stretch of water that appeared to extend to infinity. I have felt in that silence a soothing influence which made the voices inside of me hush and doze away. In the silence of the sea, I was conscious of something alive and yet noiseless, like the movement of a bird's wing, like the ripple on the water, like the passing of a met-

eor through the air. The virtue in the sea animates the senses, but does not go so far as to awake the soul."

"Why, Tom, you are awakening thoughts in me that I have never dreamed before!" she exclaimed, looking towards the Bright Angel Cañon which showed through the silvery mist like some celestial stream. "Is the silence in the desert greater than that at Athens, than that upon the sea?"

"It is greater. Obscurity, Elizabeth, comes with the absence of light. In the desert, however, the absence of noise destroys only the ear of the flesh. The voices inside of you speak loud and they are the good voices. The flesh suffers. The soul rejoices. Yes, away from the singing stream, and away from the quiet oasis, I looked about me and saw such a view as we have seen in the State of the Arid Zone. There, as here, the gracious seasons become ferocious, and they beat, torture and wound, but with all their violence they do not disfigure the earth's beautiful form. Did not the burnt mountains, the scoriated ground and the nakedness of Arizona as we looked over the vast place the other morning, give you pain? Yet what

joy do the ever-changing colors give! Vegetation may refuse to grow here, but the stones are so white, so pink, so red, so yellow, that no garden of roses is more beautiful. The other morning at dawn the whole air was a sea of I know not what color, or perhaps the angels of Heaven would call it rose! The dunes of sand were banks of violet and lavender against mountains of amethyst. When the eye of day looked over the horizon you came out and joined me. Did you not notice that the whole air trembled with the emotion of hope? It was an eye of love on that day. Don't you remember I called you 'Elizabeth' on that morning for the first time?"

"It *was* an eye of love, Tom. On that morning I felt happy and yet sad."

"Have you not noticed that joy and sorrow grow from the same soil, the heart? But the silence of the Grand Cañon is even greater than that of the desert. This morning as I went down into its depths I became aware of something which I never before experienced, either at Athens or the sea, or the desert. In that profound Cañon my soul became strong. Some of the joys which lighten and some of the affection which had burdened humanity

have been mine. I have seen, heard and spoken, but somehow to-day I felt that I had been blind, deaf and dumb. My virtues which had become drunk with over-indulgence in conceit showed themselves to me scarlet, bloated and staggering. My good deeds crouched in the corner of my heart. I felt very much depressed, very much in doubt, like the poor souls who inflict upon themselves bodily pain when under the power of fanaticism. Something seemed to burn deeper and deeper and weigh heavier and heavier until in the light of Truth I saw what I was. I had been but a living desert, a thirsty, hungry and unprofitable arid zone."

"Why Tom, that is a horrible thought."

"No! the arid zone is reclaimed. Can't you see that I am now a man? Can't you see that my day of aridity is passed? Can't you see that love for you and your love for me have made me another Tom Larkin? Oh, Elizabeth, what don't I owe you? Here we are by the brink of this Grand Cañon which you called as awful as God. The silence is like that in which heart speaks to heart, the soul speaks to its maker, and as we look across that wide gulf at the Bright Angel stream, what has

happened to us? Our old day is done, the whole earth to us melts into the incomparable sky, and in the shadows of night, amid the countless stars and in the light of a beautiful moon we have become the center of Heaven!"

As he slowly finished he gently drew her into his arms and his last words were said as his lips touched hers.

CHAPTER XVII

From that evening Tom and Elizabeth's world was flooded with nothing but sunlight. Only the beautiful pictures of life were seen by them. They had both been transformed by that kiss into different beings, and the Grand Cañon had become the link that bound them together. The only obstacle to their complete happiness was the Governor of California. But the consent of a parent, Tom thought, was not such a difficult thing to obtain in these days. Elizabeth, however, thought differently. Even using all her energy in trying to make a future picture of her father sanctioning an engagement with Tom, she could not do it. She did not want to think of what he would say and how he would act when Tom presented himself before him. There was some comfort for her in what he said as they parted for the night. "Now don't worry your dear heart about your father. Everything will be all right." She could not under-

stand how she dared make the reply, "Everything must be all right." But that made Tom more confident than ever.

So engrossed was he by his new joy that he did not think of looking at the Los Angeles paper for the quotation of stocks until after he had turned out the light and jumped into bed, and yet the paper had been put in a conspicuous place upon his bureau. But when he found that he had forgotten, he jumped up and even when he saw that the stock had had a further drop of two whole points he did not feel that weakness which he had felt the night before. The hopeful suggestion came to him that his father knew what he was about, and he felt sure that financially everything was satisfactory. There was one thing that he determined to do before he closed his eyes, and that was to write a telegram to his father and have it go the first thing the next morning. The words were few, and they did not convey the real meaning of the measure; they were, "Have made great progress. Tell me how you are."

The next morning they all rose early. While Mary was waiting upon Mrs. Larkin they were both surprised to hear someone

humming a lively air. It seemed to come from Tom's room. Mrs. Larkin doubted her hearing, and she asked, "Mary, do you hear Mr. Tom humming?"

Mary replied that she did, and Mrs. Larkin could not wait until she was dressed before she knocked at her son's door and asked, "What good news makes you so happy, Tom? Have you received any word from father?"

"Nothing has come from father," Tom replied. "Do you mind my being happy?"

"Not a bit, but it is unusual to hear you hum so early in the morning."

"Hum," thought Tom, "Why, I would sing out loud if I were in the woods where only she could hear me."

And he was happy. Everybody appeared happy. When the train left the Grand Cañon the party stood upon the observation platform and Elizabeth and Tom were seen to wave a farewell to no one.

"I suppose," whispered Nina to Tom, "that you were saying good bye to the spirit of the Cañon, weren't you?"

But Mrs. Larkin overheard her and said, "What spirit?"

"Elizabeth," replied Nina, "said this morn-

ing that the Cañon had a heart, a spirit and a soul. I'm afraid Mrs. Larkin, that we are going to feed off of poetry the rest of the trip, with a sigh now and then as a gravy."

But that did not disconcert Tom and Elizabeth. The great Arizona plain with its brilliant colors was a sea of flowers to them, from which the San Francisco mountains—Los dos Amantes, as Nina had called them—seemed like a bride and groom decked in white nuptial garments. Nina endeared herself to Tom still more by insisting upon another round at piquet with Mrs. Larkin, and one more morning was spent by Elizabeth and Tom upon the observation platform. It seemed on that morning that she had many things to tell him, and for the first time since he met her, Tom became the audience. But in many of her experiences which she related to him, there always seemed one topic that she avoided most carefully, that of her father. It was this avoidance which made Tom think Elizabeth feared him; not that she spoke a word against her father, but still Tom felt that there was something between father and daughter that hindered the full flow of filial love.

The morning was a happy one for them both.

In the light of love everything took on a different coloring. Under that influence, the desert bloomed, the mountains became tinged with greater radiance, the tall cacti became prophetic fingers that pointed heavenwards, yes, the heavens, the air, the earth all felt the influence of their love. But that did more than fill Tom's heart with joyful emotion. It started him into action. It was not until near evening that Arizona had been traversed and the train began to descend from the mountain plateau to the two Needles, to those two mountains which confine the Colorado river and which make a grand gateway into that country named by the Spaniards, no doubt in a spirit of poetic ecstasy, "California," the country of romance, of glorious visions, of gold, of Life itself.

At dinner time while the others were in their rooms, Tom went to the rear of the car and going out upon the platform looked eastward toward the land that he had left. It was as if he looked into the last few years of his life, dry, inactive, dead years, with nothing accomplished, nothing created, nothing done. But now he felt in his heart that a new life was beginning to live there, a life that was going

to be worth his while to foster and care for, a life that he knew would lift him to a higher conception, to grander thoughts, and, yes, to success. While he stood there dreaming he he did not hear the door open. Someone had stolen quietly through the drawing room and, unobserved, passed through the door. The moon was rising over the arid zone, and it was the only eye that saw what was going on upon the observation platform.

"Tom," someone whispered softly.

He turned around.

"Elizabeth," he replied, as he drew her into his arms, "see, the arid zone is behind us. We are now in a new land, and it's going to be our paradise."

CHAPTER XVIII

The next morning the sun had already risen as the Overland, two hours late, descended the Cajon Pass, that Pass of wondrous beauty which led between great mountains to the wide San Bernardino valley, to the land where the sublime face of summer is never veiled, where the air soft as velvet, carries the perfume of myriad flowers, where the sun is a constant lover, never allowing a day to go by without a glance at the earth, where forests of orange trees, fields of grain and acres of vineyards respond to loving appeals of sun and water, of earth and air.

The morning was so refreshing that the party sat upon the platform and enjoyed the views of San Antonio, San Bernardino and San Gorgonio mountains which were capped with snow. Away off above the hills that nestled in their arms the charming city of Redlands, they saw the great San Jacinto, the glory of all the mountains of Southern California. While

breathing the delicious, soft air that blew gently across the fragrant fields they felt an exhilaration that made them give exclamation of joy many times. Never did the valley appear more beautiful, and seen on that morning with the eyes of the happy lovers, it unfolded to them added beauty. Town after town was passed until Pasadena was reached, where they left the car. The journey to California was ended.

But with that accomplished there still remained great efforts to be made, problems to be solved, and above all, the consent of Governor Johnson for the hand of his daughter to be gained. Tom felt eager to go to work at once. Then, too, Elizabeth and Nina were to remain a few days before going North, and for the first time in his life, he found that the days looked too short for what he had to accomplish. The day when the expiration of the paper which had caused his father so much anxiety would take place, was not far away, and the task of averting the fatal consequences looked to him more formidable now than the winning of a girl's heart. At the hotel he found a few letters and two telegrams for his party. One of the despatches was for him, the other for

Elizabeth. Mr. Larkin had wired again that everything was satisfactory, and that he was well. The Governor, however, had sent a message which threw them all into a state of gloom. He insisted that Elizabeth should proceed at once to Sacramento upon her arrival in Pasadena.

Nothing could have disconcerted Tom more.

"You don't think," he said to Elizabeth, "that he objects to your being with us, do you?"

"Of course not, Tom," she replied resignedly. "There are a lot of things that may have happened. He may be ill. He may be lonely, for I have been away now a long time. But,"—she hesitated a moment, "that is not being frank with you, Tom. I told you that he had his peculiarities—most men do, I suppose. One of them is that he does not want me to be indebted to any one. Tom, he objects to having guests and to my being a guest."

"But you were not our guests at the Grand Cañon. You also had tickets to come West. All that we have done is to have you in our car. Tell me, Elizabeth, do you think that your father objects to the Larkins? Just when you were going to visit Catherine he stopped you,

and now that you are with us he sends for you to come back immediately."

"I do not know his reasons, Tom. He never tells me them. His wishes are simply to be complied with. He is too busy a man to answer questions. I know, though, that he is opposed to large corporations. Trusts and combinations of any kind he thinks are detrimental to the country. He has not told me this, but I have read some of his articles."

"Then I suppose he will think that I am tainted with all the sins of the trusts," said Tom with a smile.

"It may not be so funny as you think, Tom."

"But, Elizabeth, I don't care what your father thinks of me. You are the one to please. Is not that true? If you love me nothing can stand between us, neither my parents nor yours."

"I do love you, and I feel sure that you love me. But girls, you know, need advice from someone. I have no mother. An aunt tried to live with my father and me after mother's death, but she went back to New York where she lives now. Really I have no one except my father, you might say, who has brought me up. I love him, and I honor him, and I'm

old-fashioned enough to think, Tom, that I ought to obey him."

"Then I must get his consent to win you?" asked Tom.

"That may not be possible, Tom. What we can do perhaps, is to make him withhold his absolute protest."

"What kind of man can he be?" thought Tom, as Elizabeth went to send a telegram to her father.

They had been speaking in the parlor, and Nina acted as sort of a guard at the doorway. When she saw him alone looking out of the window, she went up to him.

"Now you see what kind of a man the Governor of California is," she said. "He's made of steel—no, stone, for you can bend steel."

"I must say that I'm disappointed," said Tom.

"Disappointment isn't the word for what she feels, Tom."

She called him Tom now. In her nature there was no intermediate resting place. She either liked or disliked a person. She liked Tom and she told Elizabeth so, and feeling as she did towards him she would take him into her circle and throw aside all formalities.

"Just when we are beginning to know each other, it's cruel to tear us apart so roughly."

"Well, you can expect all sorts of things now. The Governor has a way of making you feel that you are not that big," she said, placing her thumb against her first finger and measuring off the smallest possible piece.

"He will have to acknowledge me," said Tom with determination.

"That's the way to talk, Tom. But let me give you a piece of advice. Governor Johnson is a stone. The only thing you can do with him, is to crush him. But that's going to be hard. Honest men are the hardest to deal with."

"I don't know about that, Nina," said Tom doubtfully. "Honest men as far as I have seen are the ones who have more to hide than others."

"Do you really think so?"

"Perhaps I should say *so-called* honest men."

"Honest or not, he's a hard man to handle. Elizabeth would never dare to do anything directly opposite to his wishes. I don't want to discourage you, but Tom, you must go carefully. I wish I could help you, but the Governor looks upon me as a gnat. No, I don't

think with that much respect, for gnats annoy. Nobody annoys him. He's too big to feel anything, and as for heart, why, his heart is nothing more than a pump."

"It's plain that you don't like him," laughed Tom.

"No, I don't. It does me good to be able to say what I think about him to you. Before Elizabeth I have to be guarded. I would not want to hurt her for the world. After tonight I won't see her for weeks. She'll live in that house at Sacramento and will not see a soul until Mr. Johnson opens the door."

"But she will see a soul this time, Nina. I'm going up to Sacramento in a week, maybe less than that."

Nina did not argue that point. She thought that she knew the Governor pretty well. But they said no more about him because Elizabeth joined them. There was a great deal to be done before she could start on the afternoon train north, and as Tom did not want to lose a minute outside of her company he ordered an automobile and went with her and Nina to Los Angeles, helping her whenever he could. He and Elizabeth had a great deal to say to each other, but there was little

satisfaction in being interrupted by shopping duties. They did not seem to care if Nina did hear what they had to communicate, and Nina listened but said nothing until it was time to go to the station and take the train. Then she could keep quiet no longer.

"I've played the statue just as far as I am going to," she said to them. "You are geese, both of you, chattering, swimming around and enjoying each other without a thought of what you must do at Sacramento. I guess you are both afraid to talk about it, but it's got to be met. You've got to work hard, too. I can't help you a bit, for Mr. Johnson don't play piquet. You haven't much time to make your plans, so go about it at once."

Yes, they were afraid to talk about what was to be done, but after that admonition they began to formulate some sort of a programme which they were to follow. They decided that Elizabeth was to tell her father of the proposal upon her arrival home. Then after a few days Tom was to appear and plead his cause. It all sounded easy enough, but they both doubted if everything could be carried out just as it was planned. Nina would not discourage them, but she had her

opinion which she held back with difficulty. One thing pleased her, however, she was glad to see them kiss each other good-bye in the drawing room which was to be theirs on their trip north.

Tom went back to Pasadena in the automobile, feeling as if he had lost some part of himself. He had bought her a small locket and chain which she promised that she would wear, and she had given him a wallet in which he was to put her photograph just as soon as she sent it from Sacramento. So a leather wallet was all he had that was tangible to remember her by. But his intangible memories were far more dear to him, and he saw little of the country as he returned to the hotel so busily was the eye of his mind looking at mental pictures of the last few days. He found his mother waiting dinner for him in the private dining room.

"So they've gone, have they?" she asked, when he sat down to the meal.

"Yes, and I'm mighty sorry, too."

"So am I, Tom. That Miss Willetts is a fine girl, but Elizabeth is more solid, more of a woman."

"Of course she is."

The expression on the waiter's face was such as to show that he was not missing one word of the conversation. They noticed it and finished their dinner mostly in silence. When they were alone Mrs. Larkin said, "Tom we're in California now. We have crossed the arid zone. Now what have you got to tell me?"

"So you haven't forgotten my promise, have you, mother?"

"No. But I think I know about what you have to tell me, Tom. Elizabeth Johnson, if you truly have won her, is a girl with rare qualities."

"How do you know that I have won her?"

"Your old mother, Tom, is not blind. I saw that you admired her the first day out, and then you showed it in playing cards. You musn't think I played piquet with Nina just so as to amuse her. I read through everything all along."

"Not everything, Mother?"

"Yes, everything. I knew that you had something to say to her the evening you and she left Nina and me and sat down stairs in the hotel. When you went to bed that night you didn't put out the light. I knew some-

thing was wrong then. You talked to yourself, too, in whispers, but I heard them. What I don't understand is how you felt so happy the day after when you met us in the woods."

"Why, mother dear, her trip with you to the Grand View Hotel was her 'yes.'"

Then he explained to her the compact that existed between Elizabeth and himself.

"Yes," Mrs. Larkin said, after she had heard him, "that's all right for you, and I'm glad of it, Tom. But how are we to win her father's recognition?"

"That is yet to be worked out. I am going to call on you for help, and I think there's a way, but it's not going to be an easy one."

"Well, I'm always ready, Tom, to help you, even to digging down into my purse."

"That may be necessary."

"All I can say, Tom, is to go on. I have more confidence in you than father has. Come, give your mother a kiss, and then go down stairs and smoke your cigar."

CHAPTER XIX

The next morning, Mrs. Larkin was surprised to hear Tom say, 'Now, Mother, I am going into Los Angeles, and I'll be busy all day.'

"Busy?" she asked.

"Yes, very busy. Not only to-day, but to-morrow, perhaps a week. I read last evening that the railroad stock is holding its own. That means that father is holding it up, I suppose. But out here I've got to do a lot to help him. Now, don't ask what I am going to do, but just trust me."

"Shall I make any engagements for you?"

"Only for the evenings. My days are to be all my own."

Immediately after breakfast he went into Los Angeles and called upon Mr. Robert Pitman, the manager of the Western Division of the railroad. Pitman was a jovial, rotund specimen of manhood, more alert and awake

than the usual run of stout men. He was very glad to meet Mr. Thomas Larkin, and he offered at once to put him up at the clubs, to give him a dinner and to take him on trips around the country, all of which Tom declined with an abundance of thanks that took away any sting from his refusals. He gave as his reason that he would be very busy for two weeks, and after that time his plans were not quite settled. What he desired to know at that time were the names of the property owners on each side of the railroad in California. Tom asked that as if the task was as easy as to issue a free pass to a politician. Mr. Pitman, without a smile, said that he would like at least a month to get that information, and Tom concluded that business men were slower than he had thought.

"But I want this, Mr. Pitman, in a few days," Tom replied.

"It could not be done, Mr. Larkin."

"It must be done some way. Why not get two or three real estate firms to help you? It's an important matter, and what charges are incurred, I will pay."

"Oh, that's different," replied Pitman.
"Taking it that way and by telegraphing

around the state you could get a list of property holders inside of a week."

"I don't think it would be necessary to recognize any owner who does not have over ten thousand acres," added Tom, "and that would make it still easier."

Pitman replied that it would. When the President had telegraphed West saying that Mrs. Larkin and his son were on their way and asking that they be shown great attention, he had not given instructions to allow Tom to look into railroad affairs. Still Pitman looked upon the request as a simple one, not bearing upon the matters of the railroad at all. He agreed, therefore, to have the real estate agents furnish a list.

"You know, Mr. Larkin," he said, "that if the property owners find out that the railroad is making such an inquiry it might start up a boom in real estate and therefore, it must be handled gently. The fact is it is a delicate matter. My personal friends are real estate men, and if they for a moment knew that I was getting up such a list they would go mad in buying property. If you asked the real estate men, it would be worse."

"That is something I had not thought about,"

said Tom, feeling that the proposition which he was undertaking was larger than he had believed.

"There's a way out of the difficulty, and I will use it."

"I suppose you will use a searcher or some substitute to ask for the information."

"No, that might do, but I was thinking of having the manager of each county send me a list. But tell me what you want it for, perhaps I can help you in an easier way."

"I wished to find if a certain man holds a large portion."

"But the list will not give you that, Mr. Larkin. Property, you know, is not always owned by the names you read on the deeds. There are many dummies. Who is this man, may I ask?"

"Yes," replied Tom. He could see no reason why he should not give the name. That would not be betraying his father's confidence. "It is Governor Johnson."

"How strange!" exclaimed Pitman, "Your father asked the same question. Probably he was asking it for you."

Of course Pitman did not know what Tom

did, and Tom replied, "I suppose it was for me. What did you tell him?"

"After four days' search we could find out nothing."

"But you haven't given up hunting, have you?"

"Mr. Larkin, we have employed the best lawyers and real estate men on the coast, and they report that he owns nothing. Governor Johnson is a hard-backed Presbyterian, and he's too good to touch anything near a railroad, Mr. Larkin."

Tom felt like saying, "You are wrong," but he calmly replied, "Well, it seems that I have been beating about the bush when I had ought to tell you what I wanted in the first place. But I'll bother you no more to-day. My mother and I will go to San Francisco—let me see—" he was thinking of the letter that Elizabeth had promised to mail him upon her arrival home—"not to-night, but to-morrow night. Please have the private car *Mariposa* attached to the night train, will you?"

Mr. Pitman said that he would, and Tom left the office.

"So that is the man who represents the railroad out West?" Tom said to himself as he

jumped into the automobile, "he may know railroading, but as for getting information, he can't do that."

The chauffeur did not know where to go, and Tom, not wanting to go back to Pasadena, and acknowledge that his busy day was at an end, ordered him to go anywhere among the beach towns, telling him that he did not wish to return to the hotel until evening. He had not given his father the credit of suspecting the Governor of owning property near the railroad, and now he believed that he had not only looked up the owners of real estate, but that he could tell who sold most of the stock, and that he knew whether the sales were real or short ones. There was one point he had made that his father could not accomplish, the winning of Elizabeth, and as he flew along the country road, he felt a certain pride that he had done that much. But a question that did not please him continually presented itself to him. Had he won her? Had his luck really changed? Was he really to become of some use in the world?

These questions and many others had a way of coming up again after he thought that he had mentally solved them. Then, too,

he did not have a very high opinion of Mr. Pitman. He was sure that there was property belonging to the Governor somewhere, but of course, in some one else's name. Pitman, he thought, took too much for granted. Governor Johnson may be an honest man, but there was nothing dishonest in owning property near a railroad, and Tom was sorry that he did not insist upon getting a complete list of the names as he had at first requested. He wondered whether his father had taken Pitman's report as final, or whether he had made further inquiries. There was one thing that slightly upset Tom's faith in himself, he did not feel comfortable before Pitman. He had a vague feeling that Pitman did not regard him as a great factor in anything. But he would not allow his first failure after the new life, as he called it, had entered him to discourage him, and throwing aside all of his doubts, he set himself firmly to what he had planned to do.

When his mother asked him if he had had a hard day, he replied, "yes" feeling that he had given a true reply. She did not approve of leaving Pasadena the next day, but as he plead with her that it was absolutely necessary

she gave a reluctant consent. For the first time in his life she had noticed an enthusiasm that made him appear more handsome in her eyes. There was something about his get up and go, now that she recognized in his father. He could not remain seated in one place for a long time, and he looked absent-minded when he was spoken to. Mrs. Larkin was always proud of Tom, but she felt now surer than ever that he was on the way to do something that would win the favor of his father. She did not insist upon knowing what the great secret was which Tom guarded so carefully. That, she believed, would come out in good time.

That evening she received a letter from Mr. Larkin written in a hasty manner, but satisfying because it was from him. In it was a folded page which was for the eyes of Tom only. This Tom devoured voraciously. It was short like most of Mr. Larkin's family letters, but it meant a good deal to Tom, for it was the first letter he had received from him since his college days. Usually messages were written upon his mother's letters. "Dear Tom," it said, "you must know that some men are so prominent that bankers will not

allow them to fail. Stocks do not always sell at their real value. The selling of the last few days of our stock comes from San Francisco. I have taken a lot of it. It will have to be bought back some day. Then look out. There is nothing to worry over. Have a good time. Your drafts will be honored, but don't go too high. I cannot report very favorably as yet upon the big matter. I hope you are doing better than I am.

Your affectionate

Father."

The next day before he and his mother left Pasadena, he received another letter from him. This was a reply to his telegram from the Grand Cañon, saying that he was making progress. It read, simply,

"Dear Tom:—

I congratulate you upon your progress.

Hastily,

Father."

That gave Tom even more happiness than the enclosure of the night before. He had not told his father that he had won Elizabeth. He would not do that until the day of the expiration of the important paper. That day was now only two weeks away. Would it

be too short a time in which to accomplish what he wanted to do? But a letter more precious to him than that of his father was also received that afternoon. This one was from Elizabeth. He read that over a great many times. He really committed it to memory unconsciously. And as the train drew out of Los Angeles on its way to San Francisco and he sat upon the observation platform, her words came to him again and again, just as if she herself were there and she was talking to him as she had often done.

“My dearest Tom:—

I hesitated slightly before I wrote that, for this is my first letter to you, and I did not exactly know how to address you. Sometimes we fear to write what we think, and perhaps this is not as affectionate as it ought to be. I arrived home safely, saying good-bye to Nina at San Francisco. Father has not yet seen me, and before he comes home this evening, I want to enclose the photograph I promised you, and also to tell you what a happy woman you have made me. Our trip west, the ride through Kansas, New Mexico and the final outcome of our meeting at the Grand Cañon, these are memories that appear golden, and

they are my happiest ones. The difficult task of telling father that I love you is yet before me. I approach it with hesitating foot-steps, Tom. I wish you were nearer than you are. I feel that that would make me stronger. I cannot write you all I feel, and I am not going to write you a very long letter for my first one. Give my love to your dear mother, and believe me,

Affectionately yours,
Elizabeth."

CHAPTER XX

The Capitol of California seemed to smile a welcome home, and the Sacramento river was singing its quiet melody of contentment when Elizabeth alighted from the train. But she herself did not feel as happy at this homecoming as she had in her school days. Even when she returned from Europe, she had felt glad at the prospect of seeing her father. This time, however, she knew that she had aroused his resentment, and that he would make reproaches to her. The house was not far from the capitol building, and on this day in the bright sun it looked to Elizabeth sombre and uninviting. Inside it seemed like a house of mourning. It was dark and most of the shades were drawn. These Elizabeth at once raised so as to let the good warm sunlight drive away the darkness. The two old servants who had been living like moles all the time that she had been away had only a polite welcome to give her, and they seemed to

resent being disturbed. There was a musty odor about everything as if mould which grows in the dark had found an environment suitable for its development. Upstairs there was the same sombre frown.

"Why, Nora," said Elizabeth, trying to hide her displeasure, "you have closed the house so tightly that even the air is not pure. It looks as if you were afraid to have people look inside, or as if you were afraid to look outside."

"Miss Elizabeth, it was your father's wish to have the house this way."

"Where has he lived, then?"

"Here."

"But he used to like the sunlight when I was home."

"He thinks, Miss Elizabeth, that the sun fades the carpets. Then inside where there is no light there ain't no flies. He's different than when you went away."

"Isn't he well?"

"Perhaps, but he don't want to see nobody. In the evenings he goes into his study and he sets there half the night reading. He works too hard, Miss Elizabeth. He won't go out. He has no enjoyments. If your

mother was alive, she would not let him keep so much to himself."

But Elizabeth wanted the house to have once more the fresh air as it had before she went away, and the windows were opened in all the rooms, even her father's study. She saw that there was a lot of work for her to do, but one thing she felt must be done before anything else, write to Tom. This she did and after going out herself to mail the letter she began to dust her father's desk, taking care, however, not to disarrange anything. As there were a few roses blooming in the garden, she gathered them and picking out the best ones put them in a vase and placed them upon her father's desk. While working about she expected every moment that her father would call her up on the phone and say that he was glad she was home. That is what he had done before, but this time there was no call, and he did not even hurry from his office, but came home at his usual hour.

For some time she waited at the window for him, and finally seeing his tall, large figure coming up the path toward the house, she rushed out to meet him. He allowed her to encircle her arms about his neck and kiss him,

but his own arms hung down by his side. How happy she would have been if he had but put one arm around her!

"You are not angry with me, are you, Father?" she asked, as they went toward the house.

"Elizabeth, you have disobeyed me."

"Why, Father, I did not visit Catherine Larkin."

"No, you did worse than that, you came out here on the Larkin's car, a guest of the very people with whom I do not wish my name or yours associated. Then you go to the Grand Cañon with them, and you would have stayed with them at Pasadena if I had not wired you."

"Why, Father, the Larkins are very nice people."

"Of that you may have your opinion, I have mine. As Governor of California, there are some people that we must avoid. So far my name has not been linked with rulers of corporations or railroads, and Elizabeth, it must never be. I want to show the people of the United States that there is a Governor in one state who is beyond reproach. It is hard to deny ourselves friends, but we owe

a duty to the state and to the country; that duty is above all friendly ties, and yes, family ties, too."

"But, Father, you did not tell me that you wished me to avoid the Larkins. Your telegram stated, 'come home,' that was all."

"It wasn't necessary to tell a girl of twenty-two everything. Elizabeth, you ought to know me by this time."

They did not enter the house, but stood talking on the pathway.

"I'm very sorry, Father, that I have done wrong. You must know also that my going into the Larkin's car was but an accident."

"Where did you ever meet this branch of the Larkins, Elizabeth?"

"Not until this trip."

"And you dared live with them in their car without meeting them before? Why, Elizabeth, that is worse than ever!"

"Mrs. Larkin was there, and it was through her invitation that we accepted her hospitality. Some one had the stateroom which we were to occupy. I did think of you when I went with them, but Nina talked me out of objecting."

"I have told you that she was not the very

best friend that you could find. Be careful about her."

"Please don't speak ill of her. It was all my fault if there is any blame. I'm sorry. I'm very sorry that I have hurt you. I hope that you will excuse me this time."

"I suppose so. But, Elizabeth, you could not have done what you did in a worse time. Where are these Larkins now?"

"In Pasadena."

"You must not see them again. Come! Let us go inside. It is near dinnertime."

Her heart was not very light as she followed him. He complained of the house being chilly, and yet she had closed all the windows before sundown. Nora was scolded for having disobeyed orders, but Elizabeth took all the blame for that. When they were at dinner she tried to interest him in her trip, but he seemed to be preoccupied, and paid very little attention to her. Fearing that she was annoying him, the meal was finished in quietness. When he rose he said, "I've a great deal of work to do to-night, and I don't want to be disturbed."

"Is there anything I can do for you, Father?" she asked as he went to his study.

"Nothing, I shall be up until late."

He left her standing in the hallway, but before he entered she turned to him and said, "I'll take my good-night kiss now, for I would hate to disturb you."

He turned around and offered his forehead to her.

"Yes, he has changed," she said to herself, as she went into the parlor. "He is so busy that he won't say prayers before going to bed." She sat down upon a sofa under a side light, undecided whether to read or to play upon the piano. For sometime she sat there alone, not knowing what to do. Finally, thinking that music might disturb him, she decided to read. But she could not read a line. Her thoughts were beyond her control, and they were rather sad ones. While she was sitting there she heard her father's voice.

"Nora!" he called. He had rung a bell, but the servant had been slow in answering. He heard her coming and continued, "I told you not to touch my books, and why have you done so?"

Elizabeth jumped to her feet and went to him.

"She did not do it, Father. It was I," she said, "They were dusty. I thought that I had placed them back as I had found them."

"Please don't touch them hereafter, Elizabeth. Nothing annoys me more than to find a book turned upside down. The flowers I suppose you put on my desk."

"Yes, Father. Do you like them?" she asked, hopefully.

"They are fragrant, but roses always bring spiders into the house. One began to weave a web on my desk. Then, too, you spilt some water on my blotter in putting them there. The flowers will fade and drop and hereafter leave them to do that on the bushes instead of on my desk."

His reply was like a knife in her heart, but she asked gently, "Shall we have no more prayers in the evening?"

"To-night, no. We will begin our usual life to-morrow," he replied closing the door of the study.

Elizabeth went back to the parlor and sat down again under the light.

"Yes, he has changed," she said to herself, "I wonder why?"

Then she thought of Tom's father. Tom had told her that he, too, was a busy man, that he saw very little of his family, and that he did not recognize him, and she nodded her head and said, "I suppose all great men are alike." She felt depressed, however, for she had thought that he would have given her a little more of his time. She had thought also that an opportunity would offer itself in which she would tell him of her love for Tom Larkin. That now looked to her as if it would never come. He had taken a violent dislike to the Larkin family, and she felt that her task to win his favor for Tom was a hopeless one. She did not like to be kept in suspense. Her differences were usually settled before going to bed. But she did not dare to go into her father's study after he had ordered that he must not be disturbed.

All her thoughts did not, however, justify her father's actions. She resented his dislike to the Larkins simply because they were connected with a railroad. Then, too, she criticised her father's objection to Nina Willets. Here was a friend that she would not sacrifice for any consideration. Nor would she sacrifice Tom Larkin just because his father

was the head of a great corporation. If there was reasonable proof against the Larkins she would try to make her father tell her what it was. She herself could see only one thing that did not meet with her full approval since she had known Tom, and that was the way he had forced her and Nina into the private car. But that had justified itself in the honest way in which he had confessed to her what he had done. She believed him to be too frank and open to do anything deceitful. There had been nothing forced in anything he said or did, and Elizabeth believed that she was capable enough in judging the worth of a character.

She sat alone in the parlor, not regarding the time, and so busy had she been with her thoughts that she was not aware that midnight had come until she heard a noise in her father's study. Fearing his displeasure in seeing her up at that hour, she turned out the light and did not move until she heard him go upstairs. Then she listened at the doorway to see if he noticed that she had not gone to bed, but he went direct to his own room. She waited until she heard his door close and then with a suppressed sigh she

mounted the steps. Her thoughts had not been in vain. For she had resolved upon what she would do. She had decided to tell of her love before her father left the next day for the Capitol.

CHAPTER XXI

Elizabeth arose next morning an hour before prayers. At that time of the year it was dark, but she made no light, and directing her way downstairs she went into her father's study. In there she turned on the electric light and looked toward her father's desk. She saw lying open upon it a book which proved to be Cicero's orations in Latin. She made no comment to herself about his preferring to read Latin than to spend her first evening home with her. The vase of roses had been moved from the desk to a table near the door. She took the poor roses that had begun to droop and carefully turning out the light, carried them to the parlor. She was very anxious that she should not do anything that would ruffle him in the least on that morning, and turning on the light above the sofa she sat down and tried to read the book that had failed to interest her the night before.

When he entered the parlor she had read nothing. He greeted her in a stately manner, and asked her what book interested her so much that she rose early to read it.

"It is a book that I have read once before, but it appeals to me now. It is an old romance of mother's. Do you remember it?"

She handed him the book and he looked at the first page. It had been a gift from him to his wife before they were married.

"Yes," he replied. "It's a good story, but improbable. But come, let us read our lesson and say our prayers for the day."

He picked up a small Bible that laid on a table in the middle of the room and sat down upon the sofa near her.

"Since you have been away I have arrived at the sixth chapter of Ephesians," he said, and he read, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Elizabeth heard no more of the chapter,

and while he continued reading, she found herself repeating, "Children, obey your parents," and "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." In the prayer which followed, she was glad to hear him thank God that He had brought her safely back home. But after prayer he relapsed into silence, and ate his breakfast quietly. All through the meal, Elizabeth thought about how she was to begin her confession. It was not until he started toward the hall to get his hat and coat, that she summoned up her courage and went out to him.

"Father," she said, "I have something very important to say to you before you leave the house."

"I have not time now to hear you. Tonight will do."

"No, you must hear it now," she said, pleadingly, "A half hour now, Father, will be worth years perhaps after a while. It is something which affects you and me vitally. Can't you spare me some time?"

"Why, what can effect you and me vitally?" he asked. "Hurry now and I'll listen to you."

She entered the parlor and he followed her. She was a picture of noble womanhood as she

stood with no support and gracefully poisoning herself, said, "What I tell you, Father, is not easy to say. In the book which I had in my hand early this morning, and which you gave mother, who was wrong in that book, the father or the daughter?"

"I said that it was an improbable story, Elizabeth."

"It is a true one, Father. After what you said about the Larkin family last evening I tremble as I tell you what has happened. On the trip from Chicago, I fell in love with Tom Larkin."

"Elizabeth, what do you mean?" he exclaimed, more excited than she was.

"It is true, Father. And Tom Larkin loves me."

"It is not true. It can't be true. You would not disobey me that much. You would not insult me that much. What is more, I will not permit you to disobey me, or insult me."

"In that book I asked you who was wrong, the father or the daughter. Here you have the reality, for I will not deceive you. What I have told you is true."

"Then, Elizabeth, I must act. But before

drawing my conclusions I must know all the details of your trip west. I must know when you bought your tickets, and how you were invited by the Larkins into their car. You may take your time, for I have some very important matters that really may hinge on your experience. Of course you will tell me only the truth."

She related to him in full how she had bought her tickets three days before leaving, how she had found her stateroom occupied by Mary and how she and Nina had been led into believing that the private car was nothing more than a Pullman. She even went into the details of how Tom had won her. But she reached only the day when she went with Mrs. Larkin to the Grand View Hotel at the Grand Cañon when her father interrupted her.

"Elizabeth," he said, "you have been the victim of a conspiracy; you have been made the dupe of a railroad company. It is as clear to me as the light of day. I have never taken you into my confidence, but now I will. Listen to what I see in what you tell me. Mr. Larkin is the president of a great railroad. The Governor of California has information that is harmful to that road. There is no

way to bribe the Governor that Mr. Larkin knows. He learns from your friend Catherine that you are going to California. He laid a trap for you. You are taken to the car. Of course Mrs. Larkin is brought into play. Then her son, probably a handsome boy, is called upon to win you. Through you the Governor's heart is to be reached. Now do you see why I detest the Larkins? The trusts these days do not even hesitate to ruin families to gain their ends. Elizabeth, you poor, misguided girl. I pity you."

"Oh, Father, I cannot believe that," she cried.

"But it is true."

"It can't be true. No man could have a false heart who has spoken to me as he has done."

"Elizabeth, you have been deceived. I can prove it to you. But not before two weeks. In the meantime you must not bring any shame upon me by writing to this Larkin or seeing him. I prohibit both."

"But Father—" she hesitated.

"I must go now. Understand me! I will not be disobeyed."

He left without any further comment.

There could be no other solution to him than the one he had made, and Elizabeth from past experiences, knew that it would be futile to try to alter his opinion. But she would not believe that way. Many things came to her now after her father had gone that she was sorry that she had not thought of at the time. Catherine Larkin could not tell Tom's father that she and Nina were coming out to California. Tom, she felt sure was not carrying out any plan of his father. He had told her that Mr. Larkin had placed little business confidence in him. Yet she remembered that he had said to her that she could help him win his father's praise. She remembered also that he had said that he would make any sacrifice to make his father acknowledge his superiority. "That might mean many things," she thought.

She had not liked the trick that he had played upon her and Nina, but that fault was overcome by what he had said to her at the Grand Cañon. "He must love me," she said to herself many times. "I know it. I'm sure of it." Then the plot in the book that she had read before but had not gone over it the second time, came to her mind. The daughter

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there defied her father and was true to the man she loved. She had always pitied that girl, and had gone so far as to condemn the father. And that girl was confronted by the same severe and cruel order not to write or communicate in any way with her lover. What should she do? Would she disobey her father? The father in the book was only a farmer, while Elizabeth's father was the Governor of California.

CHAPTER XXII

On his arrival in San Francisco the first thing Tom did after seeing his mother comfortably settled in a hotel was to call at the office of Mr. Charles Willetts, Nina's father. It was he who had told Elizabeth that her father owned land near the railroad, and Tom had thought that through him he might find some information which he could use as a basis of operation. Mr. Willetts was president of the largest bank in the city, and usually he was a very busy man. Upon the presentation of Tom's card he received him before the other two men who waited to see him. The first glance at Mr. Willetts showed Tom where Nina had inherited her quick and lively nature. Mr. Willetts was indeed glad to meet Mr. Larkin, and said that he owed him a thousand thanks for the royal manner in which he had entertained his daughter. Tom waived all that aside and began immediately to question him about the Governor.

"The Governor," Mr. Willetts said, "was a strange combination of bone, blood and muscle—and I might say mind, for he is nearly all that—that was ever gotten together. Rather profound, a sort of a bottomless pit, Mr. Larkin."

Tom laughed.

"But if we are going to talk about the governor I had better see those two men who are waiting for me. No, sit still," he said as Tom rose to leave. "I have another office where I can see them."

While he was absent Tom looked around the room. There was an air of elegance about everything. The pictures on the walls, mostly paintings of rural scenes, the thick Persian rugs, the mahogany desk, all had the appearance of taste and luxury. Upon his desk was a picture frame with two likenesses, one of Nina, and the other Tom took to be Mrs. Willetts. Many papers were scattered about, and Tom could not help but make the comparison between the orderly manner of his father and that of the president of the Bank. But there was no picture of Mrs. Larkin and Tom on Mr. Larkin's desk. Instead was photograph of a new, up-to-date locomotive.

He did not wait very long, for Mr. Willetts came hurrying back, saying as he sat down, "Now we can dissect Mr. Johnson more carefully."

"He must be a very severe man, Mr. Willetts," Tom remarked.

"Severe! He is as severe as a precipice, a flat, steep one too, with nothing growing upon it except old lichens. No one has yet mastered him, and when you get near him you find him an impossible wall—yes, of stone. Mr. Larkin, if a man would ever get on top of him I believe he would trip and fall down, dashed to pieces."

"You haven't a very good opinion of him."

"No, I haven't. He's crushing that charming daughter of his under a fearful tyranny. Even when she is away from him he makes her feel his cruel hard hand. And what is it all about? He does not seem to want money or power or anything but just to be called honest, I suppose. But over-honesty, like over charity, like anything overdone, must have its reactions. The precipice may defy healthy vegetation, rain and snow, but it must tremble before an earthquake."

"Yes, but where is the earthquake?"

"That's it. It comes when you least expect it."

"But has anyone tried to crush him?"

"Yes, but they are now out of view, forgotten, perhaps dead. He punishes slowly, but usually with right on his side."

"Then you think the task of combating him is useless?" asked Tom, with some disappointment.

"It depends. Do you want to try it?"

"I should like to, in fact I must try it. Perhaps you can help me."

"But I could do nothing, I'm sorry, Mr. Larkin."

"You will have to do nothing that will be known, Mr. Willetts. All I would like to know is if the governor owns property near the railroad of which my father is president, and one more thing, I would like to know who is selling the stock of that railroad in San Francisco."

"They are both hard questions to answer with surety. I believe Mr. Johnson has property, but it would not be under his name. I think—understand, I don't know—but I think Watson and Company is the house that sold most of the stock."

"That does help. It gives me something to work upon. But I hope, Mr. Willetts, that I am not too insistent if I ask you one more question."

"Not at all, go on."

"Mr. Johnson must have a close friend. He must trust someone. Who works his politics for him?"

"That I can answer. Bill Mudge, a large real estate man, corpulent, loud vest, diamond stud, full face, rather hanging, and a mouth that is as tight as a clam. That man knows more about the governor than any one else in the world. Friendship for him is one of Mr. Johnson's faults."

"Is this fellow, Bill Mudge, honest, Mr. Willetts?"

"Seemingly so. There are some men just as honest in jail. At the club we call Mudge and Johnson—just for a joke—the two Judases. They are as thick as thieves. Each hides the other's rascality. They are a sort of good and evil which we all have inside of us. They have not betrayed the State as yet or themselves, that is openly, but there are some things that can be called questionable."

Tom was overjoyed at this piece of news

which he considered of great importance. He thanked Mr. Willetts for his time, and before he left he had been persuaded by Mr. Willetts to accept cards of admission into the best clubs. Mr. Willetts also told Tom that he would phone Mrs. Willetts and Nina that Mrs. Larkin was in town, and that he hoped he would see him quite often. As Tom left the bank he felt more than ever that Mr. Pitman had not made the proper search that he should have done. Pitman also had not treated him with the dignity accorded him by Mr. Willetts. Altogether, Tom felt a great, big satisfaction which made him feel that his chest was too narrow.

The firm of Watson and Company was not new to Tom. He had received an announcement from one of his best college friends, Ed Simpson, saying that he had entered the firm. With the information that that house was the one selling railroad stock, he did not know whether it would be good or bad policy for him to go there. He felt that the muscles of his face had not hardened sufficiently and that he had not enough control of them to go before his friend and not to show what he knew. Tom was a poor liar, and he felt his incapa-

bility for that particular field. But he knew, too, that the credit of being one was sometimes given to those whose bland faces revealed nothing but brotherly love. He did not feel that his own countenance was one that breathed such a religious air, but he thought that it was one which showed nothing behind it to give away. Walking along the street with no particular aim at that time, he saw on the opposite side a large window on which in prominent letters of gold he read, "Watson and Company."

At first he walked by it with no idea of entering, but before he had gone a square he turned back, crossed over the street and determined to look inside the door. This he did and he smiled at himself as he felt the same emotion he had done when he had first entered a bar room. There came to him then as at that other time, the question whether he should enter or no. Tom entered. However, he was glad that Mr. Simpson was not in his office at that time, but that he was attending a very important—the employee was careful to pause there so that the full effect might have its sway—a very important meeting. It was strange to Tom to hear that Mr. Simpson

had very important engagements, for at college the most appointments that he had had were club ones. Still, he did not want to show his lack of appreciation of Mr. Simpson's abilities, and he told the employee that he was most sorry that he was not able to see Mr. Simpson, and that he would call again. He dodged the request for his name, by saying that he was a life insurance agent. This lie Tom told in such an off-hand way that he felt a little pride in himself, especially as the employee believing that he was, left him with a quiet "Oh."

On his way out Tom met a man hurrying in. It took but a glance for him to know who it was. There was the corpulent body, loud vest, diamond stud, and full face, rather hanging. It could be no other than Mr. Mudge, he thought, and he was glad to have such a view of him. Tom looked back at him and saw him pass through a door on which was painted the words "private." "One of the best customers," he said to himself. "So that is the man who knows the governor through and through. I wonder if he knows about the paper which the governor has found?" But outside of the broker's office

he decided to learn how much property near the railroad Mr. Mudge had in his name. He had not asked Mr. Willetts what company would be a good one to give him that information, and he was obliged to call him up on the phone. Mr. Willetts was very glad to help him in that, and he mentioned the Haight Company. Tom directed himself to their office. He found that Mr. Willetts had already notified them of his visit, and he was received with great courtesy. The Haight Company already knew what one of their great competitors had in their name, and Mr. Haight informed him that Mudge and Company owned two hundred thousand acres.

"But it has no particular value," added Mr. Haight, the senior member of the firm.

"What then would give it value?" Tom asked.

"To have the railroad or some one buy property near it. To make five or six dollars, or even perhaps ten dollars an acre off of land in that bulk makes a huge fortune. It is mostly prairie land, Mr. Larkin, and is fit only for grazing in the spring."

"Have you any idea," Tom asked, "how long they have had that property?"

"Yes, I can tell you, about two weeks."

"Now one more question, if you please, Mr. Haight. Let me make a supposition. If the railroad was forced to buy property near there, who would place the value upon it?"

"That depends. If it were state property the Governor would probably appoint a committee of appraisal."

It was difficult for Tom to restrain from saying, "He would?" out loud. He did, however, control himself sufficiently to say that he was glad to learn that fact. There being nothing more to interest him he politely thanked Mr. Haight and left his office. The ease with which everything was working out gave Tom the impression that it was not so difficult to pry into deep matters, after all. "The great thing," he said to himself, "is to have the proper man at the helm." And he patted his pride by thinking that he was managing everything with sublime skill. But then the other side came to him on his way back to the hotel. "What can I do even with the knowledge that Mudge has sold stock and owns property?" he thought, "How will that harm Governor Johnson?"

This doubt somewhat shadowed his bright success of that morning. He felt, however, that he could send his father a telegram saying that he was making great progress without detracting from the truth. Before doing this he decided to call Elizabeth on the phone and to surprise her by telling her that he was in San Francisco. The enthusiasm of this moment, however, soon died away when he tried to connect with Sacramento. Long distance messages had many ears at different connections that could listen to a conversation, and Tom felt that he must be guarded in what he said. He succeeded in getting the Governor's house, and he heard, "Is that you, Miss Johnson?" and "Is that you, Mr. Larkin?" with "Here you are" and "There you are" repeated so often that he was obliged to call out "hello" many times before he finally heard Elizabeth's response. Then when he heard her reply clearly he could only think of saying, "How are you, Elizabeth?"

"Why, where are you, Tom?" she asked.

"In San Francisco," he replied. "I hope you are all right after your trip."

Her reply did not please him.

"I am well, Tom, but I am a victim of my thoughts."

He wanted to ask her "what thoughts," but he feared a refusal over the phone, and he said, "Write what you mean," and he gave her his address.

"I cannot, Tom," was her answer.

He thought that she replied sadly.

"Then I will come down to Sacramento."

"Please don't do that, Tom," she replied, still more sadly.

"But what has happened?" he asked, excitedly, forgetting that she could not reply over the phone.

"Please don't ask me. Good-bye."

"Victim of her thoughts," "Cannot write," "Don't come down." "Please don't ask," each one was like a heavy blow to Tom. He could not understand her. She was not the same Elizabeth of the Grand Cañon. What could he do under such circumstances? Without her help, without her love he felt that he could do nothing. All his light-heartedness and good humor of a few hours before was suddenly extinguished like a light blown out by a violent wind. There was no one who could help him in his new predicament except him-

self. But he felt that Nina might give him courage if not advice. He ordered an automobile and was driven to the Willetts house.

Nina was home, and she told the maid to ask Mr. Larkin to wait for her a few minutes. Minutes never seemed longer to Tom than they did at that time. All of the beautiful things in the reception room only reflected themselves upon his eyes, so disturbed was his mind. When she came down stairs quickly and entered the room she did not use the usual form of greeting for she saw by Tom's face that something had surely gone wrong.

"Why, what's happened?" she exclaimed.

"The worst that could happen," he replied, despondently. And then he told her of his conversation with Elizabeth.

"Now, Tom Larkin, that's nothing. "Can't you see that she's obeying her father? That's all his work. He's made you out to her as black as I don't know what. She loves you, and she loves her father—I don't know why—and she's fighting between these two loves. The dear soul, I know, is heartsick. Now listen to me, Tom, that girl is to be pitied. Duty to parents is all right, but how about

duty of parents to their children? I talked to her about that a good many times. I—”

“Go on, Nina,” Tom exclaimed, as she paused a moment for breath. “I feel better already.”

“I think,” she said, “that this move on the Governor’s part will be his last. It’s the first time he has crossed the path of her heart. She did not say that. But you know we say a lot of things by just holding our tongues. I found that out. Elizabeth says more in her quiet way than lots who use all their vocabularies in a day.”

“I know that, Nina. You mustn’t think that I have weakened a bit. No. I don’t want to offend her. But she won’t write. She doesn’t want me to come to Sacramento. To write to her through you is rather underhanded. There’s only one thing to do,” he said, emphatically.

“Well, what is it?”

“Why, go to Sacramento.”

“That’s the way to talk, Tom. You can’t win a girl by beckoning. You’ve got to go to her.”

CHAPTER XXIII

There were some things that Tom thought he must do before going to Sacramento, and one of them was to meet Ed Simpson. Not to see his old college chum, or at least to notify him that he was in town, would be an act of discourtesy. He decided to have him dine with him and his mother at the hotel. It would be a good ending to his first day in San Francisco. As he decided to go to Sacramento the next day, he thought that he could employ his time advantageously by reviving his old friendship with the stockbroker. Simpson recognized from the message that his employee repeated a joke of one of his friends, but he never dreamed that Tom Larkin was in town. He accepted the invitation to dinner with an eagerness that somewhat lessened when he learned that it was not to be a stag affair, but that Tom's mother was to be one of the party. Nevertheless, he was glad to hear of Tom's being in San Francisco, and

to learn that he was well. The years of separation had cooled their ardor of friendship, although they professed the same regard for each other. Ed had the same dissipated eyes, the same taste for dress and the same glib tongue, but he was hardened in appearance and less communicative about his own affairs. As far as learning anything from him that evening was concerned, the dinner was a failure. All that Tom could get from him was that his business was very good and that the last month was the most profitable of the year. One thing about which Tom had given little thought was that Simpson hoped he would take up an account in his office. Stock manipulations had never appealed to him before, but now he thought that he could see some possibilities in playing the market. If he should go into the office of Watson and Company and should buy or sell stock, he being the son of the president of the railroad, could start a sentiment in that particular office either for or against that stock. There was something to be gained by doing that, but his inexperience hindered him from knowing just how he should act. Again he decided to consult Mr. Willetts.

As he proposed to take the afternoon train to Sacramento he called up Mr. Willetts on the phone at the house the next morning and made an agreement to meet him there. Such a meeting had only one meaning to Nina, and inquisitiveness showed itself in every action and glance when she met Tom at the door. She could not understand why Tom should want her father's counsel upon how he should act toward Elizabeth. Even when Mr. Willetts told her that the meeting was only one about finances, she seemed to doubt it, and she left the room slowly enough to show that she would give anything to hear what was going to be said.

"Mr. Willetts," Tom began, when they were alone, "I have come to see you this morning about something of which I am ignorant, stock manipulations."

"Well, Mr. Larkin, that fools the best of heads. What do you want to do?"

"Nothing to-day, but perhaps later a great deal. There is such a thing as buying stock in one house and selling it in another, just to show the public that there is a movement in that particular stock. That is what I would like to do. Of course in doing that

it would require no money of any account, and it would give a false impression. What I propose to do is to sell or buy at Watson and Company and do the reverse with a Chicago house. Could you manage that for me?"

"The bank could do nothing either way."

"Of course I don't mean the bank to do anything, but I don't know how to clean up the transaction at the end of the day."

"That could be done very easily. Buy or sell at Watson's and have them clear your stock at the house through which you do the opposite."

"Yes, but some money must be put up as security somewhere, and I don't know where."

"Oh! I see your difficulty. That is also easy. Get your banker in Chicago to go back of your note for a hundred thousand dollars, and I will credit you with that sum here. A broker will want a deposit say of about ten points as margin for such a transaction. All that you will lose in that case is the broker's commission."

"I think I understand. If I sell ten thousand shares at Watson's, I have to put up a hundred thousand dollars. If I buy at a

house in Chicago, I must put up a hundred thousand dollars there."

"That is one way, and perhaps the best."

It seemed clear now to Tom, and he went away, not before answering, however, Nina's question of "When are you going?" with "This afternoon."

The rest of the morning he spent in writing to his father, telling him that he proposed to buy and sell some railroad stock in about a week, and in persuading his mother to write his uncle, his mother's brother, and president of a large bank in Chicago, to honor two notes of one hundred thousand dollars each. Mrs. Larkin could not understand what sort of a stock transaction Tom had tried to explain to her. But when she was promised faithfully that there could be no absolute loss in such a deal, she consented with a, "be careful, Tom," full of earnestness.

CHAPTER XXIV

On his way to Sacramento, Tom did not feel in the humor for admiring the beautiful country through which he passed. In reviewing what he had accomplished since he left Chicago, and in summing up the progress he had made he could only be proud of one thing, the winning of Elizabeth. Notwithstanding Nina's cheerful opinions of Elizabeth, Tom felt that his trip to Sacramento had in it the possibility of failure. He could not believe that she would refuse to see him, but he knew there must be some great reason for her replying to him as she had done over the long-distance phone. In his depressed state of mind, he did not seem to value his knowledge of Mudge's dealings. He went so far even as to think that perhaps he was not taking the right course in trying to save his father from losing money. "The debt of the railroad was an honest one," he thought, "why not pay it?"

But his force of argument soon lost its effect when he began to consider that every company, every man, has the right of self-protection. Here was a condition that had not been known by the recent railroad authorities, and why should they not try to preserve the credit of the railroad by fighting against this unseen debt. It was as if a man awoke one day and found a formidable disease that threatened to kill him, and he had taken all his force and power to combat it. With all of Tom's theories about disease and cure, he could not deny that the very soul of existence was self-protection. Taking now this stand he detected wrong in the governor and his accomplice Mudge profiting by the exposure of this paper that had been made in a moment of ignorance as to the future growth of the state. They were not even protecting themselves, but like vultures, waiting to feed upon a corpse.

In going to Sacramento Tom had used his railroad pass in procuring a drawing room in which he isolated himself. Becoming restless at one time, he walked into the smoking room, and was on the point of entering when he saw the loud vest and diamond shirt stud

which denoted plainly that Mr. Mudge was behind them. Tom went back to his room. He had thought that between two such men there would be a private telephone wire which no one could tap, but now he believed that Mudge had something important to report, or that he was going to Sacramento for fresh orders. Tom felt that he would like to hear what those two men had to say to each other, but that wish he soon dismissed as one impossible of attainment. At the station he followed Mudge until he heard him give the cab man the order to go to the Governor's office. Tom ordered his driver to go to the Governor's house.

Elizabeth was at home. In the last few days she herself was beginning to feel the influence of her father's wish for seclusion. The shades at the windows were lower than they had been before she went away. Only in her room did she allow the sunlight to have full sway, and only there too did she have fresh air. The roses, now, were left to drop on their bushes. There was a hush about the house that even affected her music. She played only to pass away the time. Most of her friends lived in San Francisco, and very

few visited her in Sacramento. And those who tried, received word that she was not at home. When Tom rung the bell, Nora came to the door and gave her usual message, but Tom would not take that as final.

"I have come from San Francisco," he said, "and I am sure that Miss Johnson would like to see me. I will enter and wait until she returns."

At first Nora was a little flustered at his request and did not know what to do, but she finally allowed Tom to enter. The parlor was not far from the front door, and Elizabeth had been playing the piano. She had stopped when the bell rang and waited until the door closed before she began to play again. Hearing someone enter, she turned quickly around and saw Tom at the parlor doorway.

"Elizabeth," he called, rushing toward her, "What is the matter?"

She did not draw away from his embrace, and even allowed him to kiss her.

"Why, it means, Tom," she replied, "that I'm not strong enough to act for myself."

"Then let me act for you."

"I wish that I could come to that con-

clusion, Tom. Father prohibits me from seeing you and from writing you. I told him that you called me up yesterday and he scolded me and said that I ought not to reply. He tells me, too, Tom, that your love is only a make-believe love, that I am a victim of a conspiracy."

"But, my dear girl, you don't believe that, do you?"

"No."

"Of course you don't."

"And then father says he has proofs which he will not give for two weeks. He has put into my mind doubts, Tom, which I have fought and conquered. I trust you, Tom, but I want to hear from you that what he says is not true. And yet he has never told me a story."

"What does he charge me with, Elizabeth?"

"He says that the Governor of California came into possession of some knowledge that would be harmful to your father's railroad. He says that usually railroads bribe high officials, that he not being able to be bribed, your father thought of other means of gaining his ends; that he has used you, to win me and through me the Governor of California. Tell

me, Tom, did you know anything that threatened the railroad before you came to California?"

"I did, Elizabeth."

"Then is father right?" she asked, trembling.

"No, he is not right. But do you believe me guilty of entering such a compact? My father may have bribed officials, elsewhere, I do not know, but he would not be my father if he asked me to blaspheme love the way your father believes he has done. And you have no more confidence in me? You believe that I would commit such a sacrilege? Elizabeth, unless I am trusted I can be of no use to you. Listen, if you wish to know the truth.

I have told you already that my father does not like what I have chosen as my profession. I have told you that he had little confidence in my ability as a writer. As to my honesty, he has told me what threatened the railroad, and I have promised him that I will not abuse that confidence. Why, Elizabeth, there is no greater sin than to be deceitful. The day I left Chicago, he opened his heart to me, he told me his condition financially, and what he had to fight against. I determined to help him, to make him feel that I was of some use

in the world, to make him acknowledge me as his equal, if not his superior. I went to the ticket office, saw your name, and I thought that I could use Catherine Larkin's friendship in meeting you and through you your father. I met you. You did the rest. You won me. That love and the love I bore you made me another man. You saw the difference at the Grand Cañon. I was passive, a laggard, a good-for-nothing. You by that word or rather by your acting, your "yes" made me active. You gave life to my thoughts, to my heart, to my life, and Elizabeth, your father cannot stand between us. I love you and will always love you. It is for you to say you still love me!"

"I do trust you, I do love you, Tom," she cried, "But my father—"

"I care not for your father. I care not for my father. All I care for, Elizabeth, is you. We are to live for each other. We are to save each other, obeying our fathers as far as the duty of children allows. An honest parent will ask no more."

"Tom, you are right. You can't speak so and be deceitful. My father is wrong in his estimation of you. I said at the Grand Cañon

that you must win his consent. I retract that now, for I will love you without his consent. But give me a few days' time to live with him. Give me until the crisis that he says threatens the railroad is over. I can't leave him now. Perhaps he won't permit me to live with him if I tell him I still love you. He has never gone that far, for I never angered him."

"But, Elizabeth, I have not given up fighting for his consent. If it doesn't come to-day it will come later. I will win with your help. I've got to win."

CHAPTER XXV

As the time approached for her father to come home, Elizabeth began to urge Tom to leave, but that was a thing he would not do. She admired his determination in wishing to confront her father, but she feared a family quarrel, and an outburst of anger. And still she felt that she had no cause to fear his anger, for he had always reproved her calmly, but forcibly. But she had never disobeyed him as she had done this time. She waited tremblingly the outcome of the meeting between him and Tom. When she heard him finally enter the house, she said to Tom, "Have you no fear of meeting him?"

"None, whatever," he replied. "We have done no wrong."

She ran out to her father and said with no tremble in her voice, "Father, I have disobeyed you. I have seen Tom Larkin. He is waiting to meet you."

The announcement had not the effect that

she had imagined it would have had. The Governor replied, with no anger, with no sadness, with no emphasis one way or the other, "I will meet him."

She started to go away, but he stopped her.

"What we have to say together, you can hear," he said, in a commanding tone.

He entered the parlor, and Tom who was standing, awaited to be addressed first.

"It seems," the Governor said slowly, "that you, Mr. Larkin, wield an influence over my daughter Elizabeth, an influence that may break up a home. Yesterday you caused her to disobey me, and again to-day her disobedience is still greater. I do not approve of your talking to her, nor do I approve of your being in my house. In fact, I have prohibited my daughter from having anything to do with you whatsoever."

"Governor Johnson," said Tom with equal calmness, "I am proud to say that I have some influence over your daughter. That she should disobey you is no fault of mine, or of hers. There is an irresistible force that draws us toward each other, and the voice of love has no master. I am proud to say that I

love Elizabeth, and that she loves me. There is nothing else in the world to us but that love. And, Governor Johnson, it is a strong, true love, a love that is more sacred than family ties. I know that you have prohibited her from seeing me. I ask you as a man to man, do you know me sufficiently well to make that demand honestly? My record is open to your close scrutiny. I am simply a man with an aim in life that may be considered low by you, but it is what calls me to its bidding. I am not a railroad man, I am not a politician, I am only an author, one who wishes to rule the minds of men by his pen—"

"But this is useless," interrupted the Governor. "You are the son of a president of a corporation, the corporation that has ruled this country with despotic power. With a combination of railroads this State has become bound and fettered. The people's voice is hidden under the corporation's command to obey. Freedom is not known. Such a condition prevails as once prevailed in Rome. But there the people fought, they found the leaders corrupt, and to gain their end they committed deeds of violence. Blood flowed deeply in the Roman streets. The Roman commonwealth

lasted longer than this country will endure. Here the people are so trodden upon, so crushed that they are palsied, and cannot raise a hand. This railroad and the others have combined so as to fix rates upon freight. A bare pittance is given the farmer, while the corporation, swollen with its watered stock, takes the large profit of his toil. This corporation has now reached a height where no voice of protest is listened to, where it defiantly waives aside the rights of the people."

"Is this my fault, Governor Johnson?"

He ignored the question completely.

"And, this railroad that has made so many men rich is now confronted by a proposition that threatens to injure it, not vitally, but sufficiently to render the rich men poor. It finds a governor whose hand has yet to do a dishonest act. It can do nothing with him, but it takes a dastardly method of influencing him. It tampers with the affections of a heart. It finds the tool and then begins to try to move the Governor in that diabolical manner. It is a crime that there is no law to punish. The trusts have been charged with causing suicide, murder, but this corporation is charged with something worse—the

ruination of a girl's heart, the ruination of a home."

"I protest!" cried Tom, now feeling aroused. "You are charging me with a deed that only a man without honor, without conscience, without soul would do."

"Corporations have no honor, no conscience, no soul," replied Mr. Johnson. "But it is useless to argue. Nothing can change my opinion. It has been made after deliberation. I will tell you this, that if you persist in your attentions to my daughter, the calamity will be hastened. I will persecute you with all of my power. If you succeed in winning her from me, I swear to you that I will tear you apart, no matter where you might be."

"I am not a coward, Governor Johnson, and you cannot frighten me."

"And now as you are in my house and have come here against my wishes, I order you away."

"Father," Elizabeth pleaded, "I—"

"Be quiet," he said, sharply, "you were only to listen to what we had to say. We have finished. You will please leave at once Mr. Larkin."

"I will speak," cried Elizabeth. "Tom,

wait a moment. My opinion must be considered. Father, is it your wish that I should stifle every thought of my heart, every dream, every joy?"

"It is my will that you should obey me. Mr. Larkin, you haven't yet left."

"Elizabeth," said Tom, as he went towards the door, "We love each other. There is only one obstacle to our happiness, your father."

"Yes, and he will keep you apart," the Governor added defiantly.

"*He shall not*," said Tom, with equal emphasis.

He picked up his coat and hurriedly left the house.

"Why are you so cruel to me, Father?" cried Elizabeth, bursting into tears.

"It is not cruelty for a father to save his daughter, Elizabeth. It was noble in Virginius to kill his daughter rather than have her the wife of Claudius. The old Roman virtues live in me. I see you the victim of a plot. I save you. *That* is not cruelty."

"It is cruel to judge him the way you have done. He could never talk to you the way he has done to me. He has won me fairly. He came here to see you like a man, and like

a man he pleaded his cause. But you heaped upon him sins that are not his, and believing that they were, you can see no good in him. Father, I have sacrificed all that I can. My friends, one by one, you have driven from me. Nina is now the only heart left to me. You would drive her also from me. I lead a life of seclusion. I have not complained. I do not complain now. I ask simply a daughter's right. Tom Larkin I love. Nothing can alter my regard for him after his visit to-day. I ask you this favor, perhaps the only great favor that I have ever requested, let me be free to love whom I will."

"Elizabeth, I pity you. He has so painted himself that you see only his goodness, his virtues, his manliness. You will see his true self in a few days. Then judge him. The other evening I commanded you not to see him or to talk to him. Both commands you have disobeyed. I have found in my household only disloyalty. I, the Governor of California, cannot rule in my own home. A daughter rebels. She would disgrace her father. She would make the people laugh at him. I hate corporations. She would marry the son of a corporation president. She

would take from me my greatest virtue—love for the people. She would give her heart to a man who is her father's enemy. She would make futile the years of his struggle. She would cover his head with shame, for failure is shame. Elizabeth, you must give up this love. I cannot permit it, I will not permit it!"

"It is the old story of the book which you gave mother," said Elizabeth, sorrowfully. "You will not tell me whether the father or the daughter was right."

He avoided answering that question now.

"It is not necessary," he said, coldly, "for me to repeat my orders of the other evening. You know the duty due me of obedience."

"Yes, I know the duty of obedience, but there is a commandment also to the parents: 'Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.' I cannot promise you that I shall obey."

"Then you defy me?" he asked, still unruffled and with a cold dignity that froze Elizabeth's heart.

"No. I will try to obey you. I can do no more, Father."

He made no reply, and left the room. It was past dinner time, and she heard him call

Nora and say to her, "Hereafter, I will eat alone in my study. Bring my dinner there."

She heard him enter his study. She heard the door close. Then, throwing herself upon the sofa and burying her face in a cushion to smother her sobs, she cried, "Why do you drive me away from your heart? Why do you try to kill my love for you?"

CHAPTER XXVI

When Tom left Governor Johnson's house, the anger that he had controlled completely mastered him. He had never been accused of being dishonorable, of having no conscience, nor soul. Now, he had been insulted, reviled, villified, before the girl he loved, and by a man whom Tom himself judged as a hypocrite, hiding under his cloak of honesty the very thing with which he was charged. He felt that he would have liked to strike him as he had those who had ever questioned his honor. He could not believe that he, Tom Larkin, generally respected, often esteemed and honored, had been driven from a house like a culprit, and that, too, before the girl who loved him. The picture of her standing and listening to every word he said to her father, to remember her quietly suppressing her thoughts under a magnificent control, that was the only comfort he had, but it was the greatest

comfort he felt that he could have. She loved him, and he cared for little else.

But the more he thought over his meeting with the governor, the more he felt that he had injured his father's cause by fighting for the railroad. The governor's threat that he would hasten the calamity that hung over his father, and the holders of the railroad stock, made Tom feel more hopeless than he did the day he left his father's office. There was nothing he could do then, and there seemed less to do now. He had met the governor, and as Mr. Willetts had told him he had found that he was more than a precipice, a moving force that crushed those who would stand up against him. What surprised him was that such a sweet girl as Elizabeth could be the daughter of a man so strong, so cold-blooded, so unmerciful.

Tom passed his first night at Sacramento with very little sleep. His mind kept busily working through a maze of suggestion, and even when daylight appeared through the windows he had thought of nothing that he could do. He wanted to go back to the governor's house, but the fact of his persistency he knew would mean a hastening of the

day when the people would know of the old Spanish paper. He tried to telephone, but he was informed that the telephone had been changed so that all messages between the hours of eight and six went to the governor's office. But Tom felt he must say something to her before he left Sacramento, and he sat down to write a letter. In that he poured out his love for her and asked her to be patient until she should hear from Nina. He told her that he was ready at any time to make whatever sacrifice was necessary in order to make her path bright and easier than it was. He even told her to show his letter to her father if she thought it would be more honorable than to hide it. He exhorted her to be brave, to trust him and to love him. He wrote that a new arid zone had come to his life, but that she was with him now to share its unfruitfulness.

In pouring out his perplexities in such a letter he felt that most of them had gone. He called a messenger. When he came Tom gave the letter to him and ordered that he take it to the governor's house, and ask for Miss Johnson and deliver it into her hands and to no other. The boy was quick and nervous, and his large

eyes seemed to ask a thousand questions at once.

"What shall I do if she isn't there? Hunt her up somewhere else?"

"No," replied Tom, "bring the letter back to me. I want a slip signed by her that she received it."

"I'm on," nodded the boy.

"Now do this right, and I'll give you a dollar."

The boy did not wait a second after that offer, and he darted away. Tom did not wait long before the paper bearing Elizabeth's name was handed him. He wanted to know all the details from the boy of how she seemed, and the boy looked into Tom's hand for the dollar as he replied, "She came to the door herself. She's a beauty, isn't she? She seemed glad to get yer letter and signed this here paper with a trembly hand."

There was great satisfaction in hearing the boy tell that, and Tom felt like giving him more than a dollar.

"Say, can't I do sumpin' else fer that dollar? That was easy."

"Yes," said Tom. "Go get a soda-water with this extra dime."

He wished that he could feel the happiness that boy did as he left him, and not knowing what to do until the train left in the afternoon, he ordered an automobile and went around the city and far into the country. He soon tired of the chauffeur's attentions. He never liked guides in any country, and the chauffeur soon learned that his customer wished to go along in silence. However, when they reached the river and Tom saw a fine-looking steam yacht at anchor, he asked the chauffeur who was the owner. He learned that it was called the Alameda, and that it belonged to a wealthy miner who had gone to Europe, and that it could be hired if anyone had the price. All kinds of floating craft pleased Tom, and expressing a desire to go aboard that yacht, he hired a man to row him out to it while the chauffeur waited on the wharf. The captain was on board and took a delight in showing Tom around. Everything had been arranged for comfort. The cabin was roomy and well-lighted by a stained glass skylight. There were accommodations for about ten people; she was completely fitted out with every convenience, even to an apparatus for wireless telegraphy. Besides that, the coal

bunkers were of sufficient size to allow a few days' trip at sea. It was an ideal yacht to Tom, and he asked the price for a month. It was not very high he thought for such a boat, and he told the captain that he would consider renting it.

The few hours on Tom's trip back to San Francisco were more fruitful than the whole night had been. What he had resolved upon nearly ran away with his patience. His mother met him with outstretched arms, but he could not keep back his new desire.

"I must have a yacht," he said.

"A yacht!" exclaimed his mother. "Why, Tom, you're crazy! Why, what has happened to you? Ever since we have left Chicago, you have been treating me to surprises. First of all, you bring into the private car two nice girls, then you make me go to the Grand Cañon. You fall in love. You go to Pasadena, and just when I am beginning to breathe easy you dash off to San Francisco, you get me to loan you money, which I think your father would not approve of, you fly to Sacramento, back again, and now you want a yacht."

"But this is more necessary than anything else. You will not lose any money, on what

you loaned me, but the yacht will cost something. I'm sure when father finds out what will happen he would pay four or five times that much. You know we are bent upon winning his acknowledgment of our powers. The yacht will do that as nothing else can."

"What do you want me to do? Go to the Sandwich Islands?"

"Now mother, don't joke. I'm serious. I will ask for nothing else after this."

"But Tom, I don't understand you."

"I sometimes don't understand myself, mother, but this time everything is clear and sure."

"Well, read over what your father has to say and we will talk it over. He has written you another letter. On our trip this time he writes to you and sends his love to me through you. I'm glad to see he's interested in what you are doing, Tom, but I don't like his forgetting to address a letter to me."

Tom opened the letter eagerly. It was a short one, but important in that it said that Governor Johnson had given his word that nothing would be done until Mr. Larkin had arrived in San Francisco. It was rather discouraging too, for it said that no way out of

the great difficulty had yet been found. But his father's discouragement in Chicago gave encouragement to Tom. He had learned more than his father had. The letter also said that Mr. Larkin would leave on a special train in time enough to land him in San Francisco two days before the expiration of the Spanish grant. Eight days, Tom thought, would give him plenty of time to work out what he had planned to do. But to do that he must have a yacht, and after considerable persuasion his mother consented to furnish the money for its hire.

His hopes now flew high, and once more he felt the joy of prospective success. The captain of the yacht was telegraphed for and in a few days the Alameda occupied by its new lessee was in San Francisco bay. Replies had come to the letter he sent his father and to the one his mother had mailed to her brother. Mrs. Larkin cautioned Tom to "go slow" while Tom's uncle wired the amount of money required to the Bank of which Mr. Willets was president. Notice had also come that a similar amount had been sent to a broker in Chicago. Everything was now ready, and Tom immediately commenced to

"work," as he was pleased to call it to himself.

He spent one morning in the office of Watson and Company talking over stocks with his old college chum, Ed Simpson. Hinting that he might want to trade, Ed took him into the room marked "private," where quotations of stocks were quietly handed through a window and not displayed on a large blackboard. In that room he chanced to meet Mr. Mudge who came to "look things over," as he told Tom. The market appeared strong on that morning, and all the stocks seemed to move up slightly except the one of which Tom's father was president. Tom mentioned that that stock was not very strong, and Mr. Mudge replied that he supposed that it was as good as the rest. Tom did not think so, and he looked at his friend Ed and said in a tone that he thought hid his true feelings very well, "Sell me ten thousand shares," and then after the order was telegraphed East, he added, "I suppose a hundred thousand dollars will be necessary to put up. If so, call Mr. Willetts and he will honor my check for that amount."

"Is it a good sale, then?" Ed asked in a whisper.

"I have nothing to say. I shall probably want to sell more to-morrow."

"What is there on, Tom?" the broker insisted. "If you feel the way you do, I don't mind telling you that some of our customers are short of the stock."

"Between you and me, Ed—now, understand, strictly between you and me, if the price to-morrow is anywhere near where it is to-day, I shall sell ten thousand more shares."

Tom thought that he was doing finely. He had even interested Mr. Mudge in his order to sell ten thousand shares. Before he left he told Ed where he would like to have the stock cleared, and he went away greatly satisfied with his first attempt at stock manipulation. That afternoon he spent cruising around the bay with his mother and the Willetts.

The next day he awaited the appearance of Mr. Mudge again, and as the price of the stock had not varied much, he gave an order to sell another ten thousand shares. Mr. Mudge listened to the order without moving a muscle on his "hanging face," as Mr. Willetts had

called it. Again in the afternoon Tom took a sail around the beautiful bay of San Francisco.

Tom kept up this mode of action until the day before his father was expected. Mrs. Larkin had not been startled by any new propositions, and she was beginning to receive her friends and make engagements which to her was a part of life itself. On the morning of this day Tom took Nina to the station and saw her safe on board the train that went to Sacramento. She went there, not so much to please Tom as that she herself wanted to know why Elizabeth had kept so silent since her return home. She promised Tom that she would return with her that evening.

"You know," she had said to Tom, "that I am the great persuader. I talked Elizabeth into going to Farmington, into going to Europe, and into going East this last fall. At school they called me 'Persuading Nina,' because I could wring permissions out of the closest and most severe teacher. Tom, I'll bring her back with me to San Francisco if there is any spark of life left in her."

And Tom believed that she would. It was his faith in Nina's influence with Elizabeth

that made him make his last plans for the day of his father's arrival. He went to his mother after saying good-bye to Nina, and asked her if she would chaperone a yacht party consisting only of Nina, Elizabeth and himself. He told her that they would be gone over a night or two, and that the trip would have to be given up without her acquiescence. Tom felt himself an adept at persuasion also, but Mrs. Larkin said that she could not think of going away just when Mr. Larkin was expected to meet her.

"Mother," he replied, "that's just the reason why I want you to go away. We don't want to be near him until the expiration of say three days from to-day. I assure you, mother dear, that our waiting that way will win his appreciation of us. You have been a good, sweet soul all along, and now this is the act that will crown both of us with success. I will have kept my promise to father, and what is more, I will have—that is, I think so—of course, there are not sure things in the future—saved him from a predicament from which, as far as I know now, there seems to him no way of escape."

"Why, Tom, you told me that you would

ask nothing more after I took the yacht for you. Another thing, Tom, what would father say?"

"If we win, why, he will praise us to the skies. If we fail, why, he will have to forgive us."

"Then, too, I expect some visitors on those days."

"Mother, there is only one thing we should allow to rule us now, the chance of success. Engagements must be broken. The joy of seeing father must be denied."

"Now, Tom, see here. I will give into you once more, but mind you, it is the last time. I'll be glad when these exciting days are over."

But the winning of his mother's consent, the agreeing of Elizabeth to come to San Francisco, difficult as this might be, was nothing to the one problem that kept Tom in a state of feverish expectation. In order to work this out satisfactorily, he depended upon the Governor's adhering to the threat which he made to Tom at the meeting in Sacramento. Would he tear Elizabeth from him as he promised that he would do? He was sure that his excitement showed itself in his face

when he entered the office of Watson and Company. This time he had telegraphed Chicago to sell ten thousand shares at a certain figure. When Ed Simpson greeted him and told him that the railroad stock was a point higher, Tom said developments had changed his opinion and he wished to buy ten thousand shares at a certain price. He gave the order. Of course, buying in San Francisco what he sold in Chicago meant no loss, but Simpson began to suspect that Tom had received a "pointer" from a good source that the stock was going up, and he so informed his other customers even calling up Mr. Mudge and giving him the news.

Tom could not have deceived his friend, Ed Simpson, better if he had tried. Most of the customers took the hint and covered up their short contracts. Mr. Mudge came around to the broker's office and could find nothing over which he could have any misgivings. In fact, his bland face seemed to wear a look of satisfaction. Even when Tom whispered to Ed loud enough for one near to hear that he would buy the same amount of stock the next day if things looked as well as they did to-day, Mr. Mudge showed no anxiety whatsoever.

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He went to the phone box, however, and called up Central with the door not tightly closed. The number that he asked for Tom heard, and also the sound of Sacramento came through the crack in the door. Tom thought then that Mr. Mudge was a little excited. But after an assuring conversation over the phone, this time with the door firmly closed, Mr. Mudge emerged no calmer in expression, but evidently easier at heart, for he asked Ed to give him a cigar.

Tom did not take his usual yacht trip that afternoon. He spent part of his time in one of the best jewelry stores in the town. He carried away a package when he left, and the way he hid it in the inside pocket of his vest, proved it must have been something precious that he had bought. On the arrival of the afternoon train from Sacramento he was in the station waiting anxiously to catch a glimpse of Nina and the girl he felt sure would come with her. And he was not disappointed. He felt a joy expand through his breast as he saw the face of that dearest girl to him in all the world. Elizabeth could not hide through her sweet smile the shadow of pain at leaving her father.

If Nina had left San Francisco on that morning as a persuader, Tom thought that she had returned a comforter and a dear, good comforter he believed her to be. Her humor was hushed and a seriousness colored all that she said, and yet she was as happy as she always was, and occasionally she would win a quiet smile from Elizabeth. And Tom could not keep his eyes from the girl who had listened to the command of her heart above those of her father. Her expression was one of resignation, and yet a little light of joy streamed through now and then that reflected the love which filled her soul.

"It makes me happy to see you two together," Nina said as they were being driven to her home. "You were just made for each other. It couldn't be a happier combination if I had planned it all myself."

"You don't call this your match then, Nina?" Tom asked.

"I guess I've helped a bit, but you both did more than I have done. And now Tom Larkin, I want you to come around to dinner, to-night. Bring your mother, and if we cannot make things interesting for her, why, I'll go back to piquet. You and Elizabeth have

got a lot to say, and we have just the kind of a parlor in which you can say it all."

Mrs. Larkin did not rebel against this new invitation. Mrs. Willetts had called upon her, and as they were both leaders in their particular society, they found each other agreeable companions. As Nina had promised, the parlor was reserved for Elizabeth and Tom and no one else. Elizabeth was rather quiet during dinner, but when she was alone with Tom her tongue was loosened.

"Since the meeting that evening, Tom," she said, "I have lived, it seems, like years. I showed my father your letter, and from that time he has not spoken to me. My heart has been torn daily. I tried to obey him, but something in me rebelled. I feel that I have acted as a daughter should, but he would have none of my love. I don't know why. I have offended him beyond repair, I fear. All I have now in this world, I feel is you and Nina."

"Yes, and a host of friends besides, Elizabeth. You will have a mother, too. But I don't believe that your father will give you up so easily. I have faith in his promises. He will persecute us. To-morrow evening

he is to meet my father at the hotel; you, Nina, mother and I will be on board of the Alameda. If we can get him to meet us on the yacht in the afternoon, I feel sure that I shall gain his consent to your loving me."

"But how can you do that?"

"In a way that is honorable, I believe. But we must get him there. I think I can do that. And you can help me. On your father's arrival at San Francisco Mr. Willetts will meet the train and give him a message from me, and if you will write a letter that would help, I'm sure."

"But what shall I say?"

"Whatever your heart tells you to say, Elizabeth. But my dear girl, I want to show you what I found this afternoon. Do you remember you told me that you were fond of jewels? Here is something I think you will like."

He took a package from his pocket and handed it to her. As she opened it she gave an exclamation of surprise, and Tom said, "The pearl is not large, but it is the purest and best in the town. The two diamonds are of the clearest blue steel. It is the most precious thing I could buy you. It is for the

girl who is more precious to me than any jewel, than my parents, than my own heart. It is a small token for you, Elizabeth. Do not wear it to-night, but only after your father has given his consent."

"Tom, I can't thank you as I should." She bashfully placed her arm around his neck and kissed him. But that form of thanks paid Tom in full.

CHAPTER XXVII

The magnificent harbor of San Francisco was flooded with golden light the next day, the day which was to test Tom's abilities to their utmost. It was shortly after noon, and Mrs. Larkin, Elizabeth and Nina were sitting aft upon the deck of the Alameda. Tom was on the bridge looking with a pair of nautical glasses toward a dock on land. He had prepared everything that morning in a satisfactory manner. Especially careful had he been that the wireless telegraph was in working order. He had left at the hotel for his father a telegraphic code which he had made the night before, and a letter regretting that he would not be there on his arrival. Watson and Company had been notified that they might receive telegraphic orders which they were to fulfill. In fact, he had arranged everything that his excited mind could suggest. One thing, the most important, was the message that Mr. Willetts was conveying

to the governor on his arrival from Sacramento. The letter which Elizabeth had written him had been given to Mr. Willetts, but as Tom looked toward the wharf he began to fear that neither his message or the letter had been delivered. Tom had calculated to a dot the time necessary for the trip from the station to the wharf, and he had even allowed half an hour for late trains and other contingencies. That time had all been used up, and the minutes dragged with incredible slowness. His watch was in and out of his pocket continually. After looking in vain toward the dock for fifteen minutes over the calculated time, he began to despair of the Governor receiving his message. However, the Captain, Richardson by name, said, "Mr. Larkin, there seems to be a boat headed this way. Perhaps that is your guest."

Tom had not noticed it, but he quickly focused his glasses upon the approaching boat, and his heart nearly stopped beating as he recognized in the seat at the stern the large broad shoulders of the Governor of California. He left the bridge, and telling the captain that he hoped that his orders would not be misunderstood, he went aft and joined his mother.

He told Elizabeth that her father would soon be on board, and asked her to go to the cabin. His mother and Nina were to remain where they were. He himself went to the gangway and watched the boat draw nearer. Closer and closer it came until Tom could see clearly the governor's face. There was nothing to show that he was ruffled or angered. The Governor ordered the boatman to await him and mounting the steps, asked Tom, "Where is Elizabeth?"

Tom most politely opened the cabin door and when he saw the Governor disappear, he quickly paid the boatman and dismissed him. Looking forward, he saw the Captain on the bridge, and a few minutes later the Alameda began to move through the water. The jarring of the boat as the engine began to turn over had startled Governor Johnson. He appeared at the cabin door. Tom met him.

"What does this mean, Mr. Larkin?" he asked, fearfully.

"It means that you drove me from your house, and that I am paying you back by making you a guest of mine."

"But where is my boat?"

"It has returned to the wharf. My sailors will take you back in the launch. As you will have plenty of time, perhaps we can talk over our wrongs. For we have both been wronged. Please enter the cabin, Governor Johnson."

"I'll not enter until I know what you mean by insulting the Governor of California."

"I will explain, but it must be done inside."

Elizabeth had followed her father and she appeared frightened at his expression, for he rarely showed any signs of anger.

"Elizabeth," Tom said, entering, "Your father and I will have to say something which probably he would not like you to hear. At your house in Sacramento you were with us. You can remain and hear what we have to say, that is if your father does not care."

"I have nothing to hide."

"Then, Elizabeth, come sit down at the table."

"I will not talk with you, Mr. Larkin."

"Very well, then I will join my mother and Miss Willetts."

He was about to go outside when Elizabeth called him.

"Why don't you speak to my father, Tom?"

"He does not wish to talk with me now,

Elizabeth. When he does I shall speak. Governor Johnson, I am ready whenever you are."

The engine had now speeded up and the yacht was moving rapidly along the river front.

"Father, why won't you speak to him?" asked Elizabeth, when they were alone. "I wrote you that you must meet us before we announced our engagement. I called upon you for your help, but I fear you have come to curse me. I have never seen you as you are to-day. You do not hate me, do you?"

"I came here to drag you from that man, not by force, but by reason. I swore that you should never be his, that I would persecute you if you persisted. I have come to warn you that if that engagement takes place, I cannot acknowledge you as my daughter."

"Then, Father, listen to me. When I came back from my trip East you were not my father, you ignored me, you drove every feeling of love I had for you away. My first evening at home was spent alone. In the days since you have not even spoken to me. You have driven me away. I have friends, and now I thank the Lord I have some one who

loves me. And I will go to him. If it is your will that I am no longer your daughter, it is my will that you are no longer my father. The story in the book is therefore ended. There the daughter acted as I am doing now."

She left the cabin and followed Tom. He saw her coming, and went to join her, and together they walked forward.

"Tom," she said, sadly, "it is all over. He has no more a daughter. I no more a father. The words have been spoken."

"Yes, but you have not yet lived that life. Your father will speak to you and to me. More, I am surer than ever that I will win his consent."

"Why, how, Tom?" she asked, amazed.

"See!" he said, pointing to the rocks ahead. "That is the Golden Gate. Once outside of those portals and your father is won."

"But, how, Tom?" she asked incredulously.

"Oh, Elizabeth, I'm happy beyond the power to express. My father is now saved. I shall win his praise. I shall win your father's respect. Come, stand with me by the rail and watch the passing shores. I have told you before that the Arid Zone is behind us,

and it is. Before us now is recognition and—yes, honor, too, I believe.”

“But, Tom, I don’t understand you.”

“You will before we return to San Francisco.”

“Then my father is not lost to me?” she asked, hopefully.

“I don’t think so.”

They watched the shore until they reached the Gateway itself. Then Tom left her with his mother and Nina and entered the cabin.

The Governor had not moved from where they had left him. He began to suspect that the yacht would not make a short trip around the bay, and the predicament in which he found himself began to dawn upon him.

“Governor Johnson,” Tom said, “you will find your room below to the right. It is the room of honor. I have left in there everything you may need for your toilet. I am more gracious than you were to me.”

“I want to know what you mean?”

“Then you will talk to me?”

“Tell me instantly what you mean,” he commanded, now fully angry.

“It means that we are going to sea for two

days. It means that you must be my guest for that length of time."

Tom sat down at the table and pressed an electric button. A steward answered and he was sent for the wireless operator. Tom consulted his code and wrote out a despatch. He wrote out a second one. When the man appeared Tom read over his messages and asked if they were perfectly clear. The man understood and read aloud one of them which the Governor heard. It was for Mr. Larkin, Senior. The cipher no one understood but Tom. It said that he had won and that Governor Johnson would not keep his appointment as he was going on a two days' trip with Mrs. Larkin, his daughter and Tom. The other was read over quietly.

"You then have communication with the land?" said the Governor as the operator left the cabin.

"Yes," replied Tom. "But nothing leaves the yacht without my approval. This, you know, is a private boat. There is only one master here."

That the Governor knew. He knew also that he had been shorn of his authority and he stood before Tom Larkin more as a sup-

phant than as a Governor of a State. He had controlled his anger sufficiently now to think and talk calmly.

"I suppose a concession is what you wish," he said.

"No. I want nothing but your absence from California. That I have obtained, not by trickery, Governor Johnson, for the message Mr. Willetts delivered to you was an honest one. My father will meet you on the yacht, but not until I have worked out his and your salvation."

"My salvation!" exclaimed the Governor.

"Yes, your salvation. Your reputation heretofore has been as far as people know honest, straightforward, straight and true. But, Mr. Johnson, will you speak to me now?"

"I will hear what you have to say," replied Mr. Johnson, moving towards the table.

"Then please be seated," said Tom, as self-controlled as the governor himself.

"I have already told you what my aim is in life. I have not told you that I have a father's praise to win. Father is a self-made man. I exist upon his means and brains. For the last few years I have been compelled to live a life of inaction, but of absorption.

I have gathered truths from all religions, from all people. I came home from Europe, I found that I must go to California with my mother. I asserted a son's right in knowing the condition of my father's resources. I demanded his confidence. He told me of the paper you had found. I promised him that I would help him, but not with his assistance. What I was to do I would do alone. The meeting with Elizabeth you already know. It is she who stirred within me a new life, a life of action, of work, a life that would be worth while!

"I did not know what sort of man you were," Tom continued, "except that your name and honesty went hand and hand. Your daughter always spoke of you with words of praise. You for some reason have taken a violent hatred against corporations. My fault was in being the son of Mr. Larkin. You hated me without knowing me. You insulted me; you called me dishonest; a man without a conscience or soul; you drove me from your house. I am a man who believes in an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth, and for wrong, retaliation. That is a manly belief. I learn that you also love revenge."

"That is not true."

"Pardon me! As a ruler you enforce the laws and they, as you know, are forms of revenge. Because the minority do not believe as the majority, they are forced to obey the law of force and of power. If the law is broken there is a punishment. Mr. Johnson, that is a form of revenge. But let us waive that point. I come to San Francisco, I learn of a character who is associated with you; that character is called your evil self. His name is Mudge."

"He is but my henchman, nothing more."

"I will speak of what I know. He and you bought two hundred thousand acres of land near the railroad the day you discovered the Spanish grant. You and he have sold stock which you do not own in my father's railroad."

"It is a lie! a damned lie!" cried the Governor, bringing his fist down upon the table.

"Do you deny that you do not know that I sold in the office of Watson and Company fifty thousand shares of stock, and that I bought some yesterday? Do not perjure yourself, Mr. Johnson. You are a Christian, you have prayers at home and read the scriptures. Can you swear that Mr. Mudge did not

telephone you yesterday morning what I was doing? Be careful, Mr. Johnson, I have a witness."

"It is all a lie. There are no proofs."

"I have the proof. The stock market is now strong. The railroad stock has not advanced as yet. After the expiration of the time of that paper that stock you know will advance ten, yes, twenty points. The account marked special at Watson and Company's will soon be required to liquidate. In fact Mr. Johnson, a twenty point raise will cripple you. I propose to buy while we are out at sea fifty thousand shares of stock. I would like to save your honest name, and I believe I shall before we return to San Francisco."

It was plainly evident to Tom that the Governor was suffering under a resentment that threatened to break out at any moment. He was quite surprised that he himself had talked with so little excitement. He knew that he was playing the game of his life. He had no absolute proof of what he asserted, but he knew that if Mr. Johnson had sold stock which he did not own that he would be restless in a place where he could not see the price of

stock and be in touch with his broker. For the first time he had seen the Governor unsettled.

"So that is your father's work!" he said, musingly.

"No. It is my own work from start to finish. He has not even loaned me the money with which to manipulate the stocks. His plan of working, if he has one, is different from mine. But mine shall win. You are the Governor of California, but you have no voice on board of the boat. You will not attempt to coerce the captain or the crew. Besides, I would not be at all surprised if Mr. Mudge will cover his stock tomorrow, for he has been telegraphed that you would be my guest on a trip to sea."

"Have you done that?" cried the Governor.

"Yes, I have done that. The other message was for him. Is it not true?"

The Governor had risen. He did not seem to know what to do. As a wolf brought to bay shows his teeth and strains to fight to the last, so did Mr. Johnson appear standing before Tom.

"You are a coward to fight this way."

"But what are you? You, under your

honest name, would crush a railroad. You would make all the stockholders suffer an irreparable loss. And then you would feed upon the slaughter. You call the trusts vultures that set upon the House of Congress and the Senate. They feed upon what you would feed. Money, the greed for money has even reached you. I am no coward. I am fighting for self-existence. You do the same, Mr. Johnson. You have lost and I have won!"

They were both now angry. But Tom soon regained his composure and broke the silence that followed.

"We are at sea, Governor; my mother, Miss Willetts and Elizabeth are on board. We dine at seven. Will you meet my mother and Miss Willetts now? Perhaps you prefer to go to your room. Please make yourself at home. Anything you may wish the steward will give you. I must now join the ladies. When you wish to talk again with me, send for me. I shall be ready at any time."

CHAPTER XXVIII

That evening dinner was served in the cabin to four people only. The Governor ate his alone in his state-room. It was not a very cheerful meal, although Nina did her best to drive away the gloom which oppressed Elizabeth. Tom, himself, felt cheerful. Mrs. Larkin felt, however, that her son was committing some terrible deed and every new sound made her anxious, for she expected that it hid some impending disaster. She had not reconciled herself into believing that she had acted as a wife should do in running away from her husband on the very day that he was to arrive in town. But a wireless telegram directed to herself soon restored her equanimity. It was from Mr. Larkin and he sent with it his congratulations to Tom. Another telegram came that evening addressed to Governor Johnson from Mr. Mudge. It said, "A betrayal would be disastrous."

This Tom himself handed to the Governor.

He received in answer that no reply would be necessary. The game of bridge which they tried to play before going to their rooms for the night was a listless one. How different they all felt from the time they were together in the private car.

"It's like playing a game of cards at a funeral," said Nina after she had tried several times to cheer them. "I feel just like some pirate who thinks the law is about to strike him."

"I'm sorry that the Governor does not like the water," said Mrs. Larkin, who had not known the true condition. "Then why did he come?"

"Mother," replied Tom. "It's a trip that will do us all good, at least I hope so. I think that we shall feel brighter in the morning. Supposing that we stop now and go to bed. Maybe we all want solitude. I'm sure my mind is not on the game, and Nina's is dear knows where."

"No, it's not on this game, that's one sure thing," Nina replied.

They stopped playing and Tom went with Elizabeth to the door of her room. She had been very quiet all the evening.

"Tom, dear, tell me, are we doing wrong?"

"It is but an act of self-preservation, Elizabeth. That, you know, sometimes clears a man even of murder. The State of California will be the sufferer. We shall be the winners."

"But poor father," she said sadly. "I must say good-night to him, although we did part to-day. Let me go to him."

Tom followed her to her father's door. She gently tapped upon it and called softly, "Father, Father?"

There was no reply.

"Perhaps he felt that I lured him here," she said to Tom.

"Your letter may have helped. But, Elizabeth, there is nothing with which you can reproach yourself."

She returned to her room and kissed Tom good-night.

"The ring," he said, "you can put on to-morrow with his consent, or else I am greatly mistaken."

Tom did not retire. He put the lights out in the dining room and went above and sat down by the table in the main deck cabin.

"It will be a hollow victory," he said to himself, "if he doesn't give his consent. Dear

Elizabeth! How can he be so cruel to her?"

And there he sat thinking about her, about himself and about his father, until it was near midnight. When all was quiet except the churning of the propeller and the throb of the engines, he heard a door open below. Shortly after, Governor Johnson came up the companion way steps. Tom was surprised to see him.

"What can I do for you, Governor?" he asked.

Tom thought that he saw him start and hesitate as if he had been surprised in some guilty act.

"I thought that you had retired," replied the Governor. "I wished to talk with the Captain. He cannot understand what you are doing."

"I am alone responsible for his actions, Governor Johnson. He understands fully what I have done. The Captain is a Mr. Richardson, and he knows you. He is not a friend of yours."

"Richardson!" exclaimed the Governor. "So you managed to find an enemy to help you."

"It was by accident only. I do not know what you have done to him, but he—"

"It was only a matter of politics," he interrupted impatiently. "But don't you see that you are committing a crime by taking me captive in this manner?"

"Possibly so. But you came without being forced. I call you my guest. All that I have done and all that you have done can be aired in the courts if you so decide. Fortunately, I stand in the right."

"And am I not in the right, fighting for the State of which I am the head?"

"Yes. The battle is on, Governor. Victory will rest upon the stronger."

"But what if I agree to allow that Spanish grant to lapse? It is known only by your father and me. Would you in that case return to land?"

"No."

"But if I give you my promise?"

"I cannot trust you. You would not trust me. You have also denied things that are true. Governor Johnson, the Alameda goes straight west until to-morrow afternoon at two o'clock. Then we shall return to San Francisco. You shall then meet my father.

That I will arrange later. This meeting will take place on the Alameda, as I have promised you."

There was a long pause in which both were thinking deeply. Tom looked toward the table, but he felt that he was being watched closely by the Governor. He wondered if his face showed what was passing in his mind. Fortunately the light was back of him and to one side, and his face was in the shadow while every feature upon the Governor's face was revealed to him distinctly. The moment was a crucial one, Tom thought, and he felt that there was a dignity in his silence that was impressive, even to himself. He was determined that he would not break the pause as he felt that he had already spoken sufficiently clear to make himself understood.

"Mr. Larkin," the Governor finally said, "I have always known where I was weak and where I was strong. I fully realize the position in which I am now placed. There are evidently concessions to be demanded. What are they?"

"The first is to take back your daughter, the second give her to me."

"And for that, what do you concede?"

"That depends," replied Tom. He did not like this bartering.

"I must communicate with Mr. Mudge."

"Write whatever you wish," Tom said, pushing over a sheet of paper.

"It must be a private message."

"That I cannot allow."

"Larkin, I can be obdurate."

"I can be too, Governor Johnson."

There was another pause in which both again thought deeply. Governor Johnson again broke the silence.

"I would like to know some of the proofs of your assertions that I own stock and land with Mr. Mudge."

"The proofs I will give you day after tomorrow when we enter the Golden Gate."

"What has Mr. Mudge told you?"

"That is something I cannot answer until that time."

"Then I will have to confess to you that I have sold stock in your father's railroad which I do not own. The amount is twenty-five thousand shares. At the present time I have a profit of a hundred thousand dollars. If I could buy that stock at the price it closed today, I could be a friend of yours."

The statement sent flying all the dignity that Tom had gathered carefully together. He rang the electric bell, holding his finger upon the button until the sleepy steward appeared. He sent him immediately for the wireless operator who had to be awakened. Then he wrote out a despatch again in cipher for his father. This time he said, "Have won everything if twenty-five thousand shares of stock can be bought at the price at the close of the market."

The message was to be sent "urgent."

A little while after another message was given the operator. It was from the Governor to his henchman, Mr. Mudge. It had been shown to Tom. It read, "Have no anxiety."

As there was nothing more to do that night, they went below. The Governor seemed friendly, and shook Tom by the hand for his "good-night." When Tom closed his own stateroom door, he said to himself, "What kind of a man are you, Governor Johnson?"

CHAPTER XXIX

Governor Johnson and Tom were both awake before sunrise the next morning, but no message came from Mr. Larkin until an hour before breakfast. At that time Tom was handed a despatch which after translating he gave to the Governor. It said that Mr. Larkin could furnish double the amount if necessary. With a quickness that startled Tom, Governor Johnson requested that he might send another telegram to his henchman Mudge. It was written and Tom himself took it to the operator. He was not sure of the price which Mudge had sold his stock, but if he had received the same amount as the Governor, the conditions in the message would give him only half of the profit which Governor Johnson had made on his transaction. Then, too, the message was so worded that Mudge could not help but agree to the Governor's proposition. As Tom joined his illustrious guest who was watching the water being

stirred by the propeller, he thought that the Governor was taking advantage of his close friend.

"The message has been sent, Governor," Tom said, "Now I hope you will join our party and enjoy the rest of the trip."

"Yes, I shall do so. But tell me, as I have told you what has been done, I want to know what were your proofs that I held stock and land with Mudge?"

"The proofs I will tell you now, Governor Johnson, were given by you last evening."

"Then you played a game of bluff?"

"Not altogether."

"Larkin," replied the Governor, "I didn't give you the credit of being so clever. You would make a good politician. You hide what you do as well as Mudge, and he is the best deceiver I know."

Tom was not pleased with this doubtful compliment.

"I have done nothing more than what my manhood prompted me to do, Governor Johnson. The only deception I have played is when I sold and bought stock before Mudge in Watson and Company's office. What I did there was but a trick that many brokers

practice. When I bought at Watson and Company I sold in Chicago. When I sold at Watson's, I bought in Chicago. In everything else I have acted honestly and above board. But now I insist upon your carrying out your concessions."

The Governor replied that he was prepared, and Tom went into the cabin calling Elizabeth before he reached her door. The ring in his voice was that of victory, and she knew it before she saw his face. But when she joined him and felt his arms about her and heard his voice close to her ears saying, "Oh! I am so happy now," she felt her own heart swell with joy. Tom did not go with her to her father, but waited near the cabin door. He felt that they had more to say to each other than could be said before him. Shortly after, he heard the Governor call, "Larkin, where are you?"

It did not take Tom long to join them.

"Larkin," said Governor Johnson with more emotion than he had ever shown to Elizabeth, "I feel proud of you. Let me tell you that you have won from a man who considers himself a good politician. You have won Elizabeth fairly, and as she loves you and you

love her, there is no reason why I should keep you apart."

"Can it be possible?" cried all the voices in Tom joyfully. There was nothing now to him, no sea, no yacht, no sun but all joy over his great success. Nina and Mrs. Larkin soon joined them, for when Tom had called Elizabeth they thought that something unusual had occurred and they accelerated their speed in dressing to see what it might be. And they found what it was when they saw Tom's face radiant with joy. Even the Governor felt the happy contagion, and although he did not smile, his face wore an expression of satisfaction. He met Mrs. Larkin with a forced affability and Nina could not believe she shook hands with the same man she had known at Sacramento. As they went to breakfast, Nina could restrain herself no longer.

"Tom Larkin," she said, "you have done miracles. I could never believe that anybody could climb such a height. It's a miracle, that's what it is and nothing else."

And somehow that was what Elizabeth thought. The ring which Tom had given her she wore at breakfast and Nina again broke forth, "It's perfect! Just the kind for you,

Elizabeth. It couldn't be better, could it, Mrs. Larkin? Elizabeth Johnson, it seems to me that your limit of happiness has been reached."

"No, not yet," objected Tom, "her happiness I hope has just begun."

In the afternoon the boat had changed her course and her bow pointed Eastward. An answer had been received by the Governor about Mudge's stock, and Mr. Larkin had been notified that his offer had been accepted. Everything had been accomplished that Tom had set out to do, and on that afternoon the sun shone its brightest and the dark blue Pacific ocean was as tranquil as a happy dreaming child. Elizabeth and Tom stood at the bow and watched the water as it sprinkled in a shower of diamonds before their path. The furrows of the water received the seeds of the lovers' dreams and as the waves lost themselves in the wide ocean far behind the boat the seeds seemed to blossom into flowers of golden light. It was a moment when the sea and the air and the sky were in accord, and the hearts of Tom and Elizabeth attuned themselves to that music which has not yet been written, but which has been heard.

"So, Tom, you have won, have you?" Elizabeth asked joyfully.

"Everything," replied Tom. "Father's acknowledgment, your father's consent, and you, dear Elizabeth. I owe you more than my life can ever repay. You renewed my arid life and made it fruitful. It is the old miracle, and yet a new one, the power of love. In Europe, I often asked my soul, 'Why do you live?' and the answer was an echo, 'Why do you live?' One more vice, one more noble passion less, a frown on my brow, a wound in my heart, and every day a flower of hope fallen and withered. But now, Elizabeth, I have found a new world, a world with you only in it. Our past is covered by a dark veil, our future by a veil of roses. The one has the texture of experience, the other of hope. Our present is a luminous circle, the circle of our new found joy."

"But why do you give me all the credit, Tom?" she asked.

"Nothing can grow without the sun."

"And nothing can grow without the earth. Both are necessary."

It was past noon of the eventful day when the Spanish grant would be void, and the Ala-

meda could be seen headed directly for the Golden Gate. A large steam launch was approaching the yacht, and as they drew nearer together, the sound of their whistles carried back and forth frequent salutes. On the launch was Mr. Larkin, the president of a great railroad. He had been wired to meet the Alameda upon the sea. The two crafts finally stopped and Tom stood at the head of the companionway and held his arms out to his father, who as anxious as the son, ran up the few steps and took him in his arms. Mrs. Larkin, proud as any mother could be, was the next to receive an embrace. Nina seemed to feel as if she were in the way, but she met Mr. Larkin and said that she had never seen so much happiness floating about in such profusion in all her life. The Governor and Elizabeth were waiting in the cabin. After the two great men had been introduced and Elizabeth had been spoken of as Miss Johnson, Mr. Larkin turned to Tom and shook his head doubtfully as if he could not believe that Tom was his son.

"Tom, you have at last seen the folly of writing books. You have now won a place in the business world."

"Why, Father, I have just begun my literary work. What I lacked was inspiration. That I have gained. The Governor's daughter is to be one of the Larkin family. I have won more than a place among the politicians; I have won more than a place among business men. I have won the place by the side of that dear girl."

"And you wouldn't tell your old father that before?"

"No. It was only yesterday morning that the Governor would give his consent."

"Well, I'm mighty proud of you, Tom."

"It is a joy, Father, to fight and win. And I think I have won. But the victory belongs to Elizabeth. It was she who lead me across the Arid Zone. It was she who drove me to act. It was she who has inspired in me the virtue of a successful book—for I have now a story that will win me fame!"

THE END

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